Bishop questions Fr. Suarez's healing activities

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Mormon Church leader Hinckley dies

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Peso seen firming up at 38.50-39 to $1

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Kidapawan mayor admits payoff to terror group

LIFESTYLE / C1
The whole truth about breakfast and weight loss

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Sunday, January 31, 1999 | Vol. 23 | No. 31 | P18

Bishops joke on creation of 'Malacañang diocese'

Dead man comes back to life during Pampanga healing

Bishops seek closure to 'Hello Garci'

Media ask SC to stop gov't threats, arrests

70 journalists sign petition vs top gov't execs

WHAT'S GOING ON! A child starves as campaigners bandage an activist policeman who has led a mounted group that tried to march on Mendiola demanding the scrapping of the 12-percent value-added tax on oil.

Esperon warning raises disquiet

Bad news for RP's Ms Tapias

LAW'YER jose Diokno jr. shows a copy of the petition. Behind him, from left, are Maria Serena and Cherie Villa of ABS-CBN and INQUIRER columnist Rina Jimenez-David.

MORE IS LESS

City gov'ts up in arms over IRA cut

UN meeting targets plundering leaders

A2 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2008

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 FOUR DIGIT
2 10 5 8 8 4
SUERTRES
5 5 0 6 1 1
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7 16 15 18 25 40
P27,283,338.00

OFWs get financial boost

GMA in Dubai launches schemes to help Pinoys stretch dollars

By TJ Burgonio

DUBAI (VIA PLDT)—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo ended her brief visit here yesterday after launching various financial programs to help overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) save money despite the weak dollar.

Among the new OFW packages she launched Sunday night before some 300 Filipino workers at the ballroom of the Mina Al-Salam Hotel here were: A bridge fund that will guarantee an agreed-upon dollar-peso exchange rate; a fast-transfer digital cash card; a high-yielding deposit facility OFW bonds; a dollar-investing seminars; offers for "Pinoy-friendly" franchises; and others.

The bridging program aims to protect the OFWs' savings from the weak dollar that has drastically cut the peso equivalent of their earnings. The cash card, on the other hand, would allow them to quickly send money back home via short messaging system or text.

The President explained to the Filipino community that the positive side of the dollar's drop was that it had reduced the national debt and import bill, kept the inflation down, and more importantly offset the impact of high world oil prices.

"Just having said that, we know that we have to cushion the impact of the strengthening of the peso on our overseas Filipino workers," she said.

Under the Development Bank of the Philippines' bridging program, a worker can avail himself of insurance that would allow him to insure one's dollar remittance at a certain protection rate.

The worker can later sell the dollars to the DBP at the pre-agreed protection rate.

Apart from this unique insurance, the worker has another option to avail himself of a forward exchange contract which would allow him to sell his dollars to the DBP at a contracted rate at a specified future date.

The dollars are "locked in" at the contract rate (also forward rate) regardless of the peso depreciation or appreciation.

"Those who will avail of the insurance will pay an insurance fee, around 1 percent of the amount of remittance to cover the OFW at the pre-agreed exchange rate," said Development, who arrived here Saturday night from Switzerland.

The program is voluntary she stressed.

Filipino workers in the United Arab Emirates alone remitted $3.5 billion last year, according to the President.

Overall, OFWs sent back an estimated $13 billion last year.

The President also announced that the government would launch "GMA bonds" in March to likewise cushion the impact of the declining peso equivalent of the workers' dollar earnings.

Specifically, the government plans to launch a P5-billion dispatch instrument, called long-term negotiable certificates of deposit, that will earn interests for the investing workers and their families.

According to finance officials, the peso-denominated LTNCD will be issued in P50,000 denominations in five- and a half and 10-year tenors by March. It is covered by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. up to P250,000 per depositor and is exempt from withholding tax if held to maturity.

The investment carries an indicative yield of 6.25 percent for a five- and a half-year term, and 6.688 percent if held for 10 years. The final interest rates, however, will depend on the prevailing market rates at the time of issuance. It will be available by March in all Land Bank of the Philippines branches, DBDC and designated selling agents.

Before addressing the 10 Filipino community, the President held a roundtable discussion with executives of UAE companies to enlist their support for the bridging program.

She said the employers "affirmed their support."

That same night, LBP and Smart Communications launched the Jeva remittance OFW cash card to allow the workers to send remittances in a cheaper, faster means via SMS.

The cash card serves as a sort of debit card linked to a mobile phone with a Smart SIM.

Using a cellphone, a worker keys in the desired amount on a menu, and transmits this by text to LBP. The worker's relative in Manila can then withdraw the amount from the worker's account at banks with an ATM the beneficiary's card. *With reports from Doris Dumlao and Cynthia Balana*

PRESIDENT ARROYO assisted by Landbank president and CEO Gilda Pico (left) hands over a Landbank Smart OFW cash card to Filipino worker Rolando Gubat at the launch of several financial programs in Dubai aimed at helping OFWs keep more of their money despite the weakening of the dollar

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- **UP STUDENTS** keep up fight vs cigarette ads /A7

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GMA didn't spend a dime at world's best hotel — Bunye

By TJ Burgonio

DUBAI (VIA PLDT)—WHILE IT WAS A brief visit, President Macapagal-Arroyo created a stir among the press here over her stay at the luxurious Burj al-Arab hotel.

The President's stay at one of the most expensive hotels in the world was the subject of talk among Metro-based journalists even before she and her delegation arrived here last night from Switzerland.

It was the limit when Ms Arroyo showed up at the Mina Al-Salam hotel for her business meeting with the leaders of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry at 2 p.m. Sunday.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye was quick to dispel the notion the Philippine government had paid for the President's stay at the seven-star hotel, which prides itself on being the world's best.

"She's the guest of the host. So if you're a guest of the host ..." Bunye told reporters, justifying that Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum had paid the bill.

Modeled after a billowing sail, the Burj al-Arab (Tower of the Arabs) rises 321 meters, or 1,060 feet, against the Dubai coastline, making it the tallest hotel in the world.

More than 9,000 square meters of gold leaf, marble, granite and crystal were used to decorate the interior of the hotel which boasts an array of 46 butlers, a fleet of Rolls Royce limousines to transport guests, and a submarine ride to an underwater restaurant, among other ultra-luxurious amenities.

A suite in the 202-suite hotel can cost upwards $15,000 a night, according to BBC report.

"We should look at the real picture. Let's leave it at that," Bunye said rarely when he was repeatedly asked if the government was footing the President's hotel bill.

Iloilo Rep. Jamore Garin, who was part of the President's delegation of lawmakers, said Ms Arroyo's stay was complimentary of the Dubai rulers.

"I think that's a complimentary from the ruler. When you're in UAE, that goes the same for visiting heads of state," she said.

She said the 31 or so lawmakers with the President stayed at different hotels in Dubai and paid their own bills, as in Switzerland.

The President crossed a line in Manila early this week when she brought an 80-man delegation, composed of Cabinet officials and lawmakers, in the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Ms Arroyo and her delegation were scheduled to leave Dubai Monday night and were expected to arrive in Manila Tuesday morning.

Solons to give Melo hard time

By Gil Cabacungan and Dona Pazzibugan

DESPITE AN INITIAL BARRAGE OF POSItive reactions to her appointment as chair of the Commission on Elections, former Associate Justice Reynato Puno's nomination is likely to the Commission on Appointments.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a member of the powerful commission, said Wednesday will have to explain his links to the scandal-tainted former Chief Justice Hilario Davide.

Lacson said Monday alone commission on Appointments (full disclosure) when Puno appeared before a Senate inquiry last year to answer charges that he offered businessman Jose de Venecia and then Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri multimillion peso bribes to clear the way for a contract between the Chinese ZTE company and the government for the establishment of a National Broadband Network.

Alsabe denied the charges but resigned shortly after the hearings. Malacañang cancelled the NBN deal.

"If you notice during the ZTE hearings, whenever Alsabe's name would ring he (Davide) was seated behind Chairman Alsabe. The only person allowed to sit behind the executive power is the legal counsel. So you can see his connection to Alsabe," said Lacson in an interview.

Biazo will also likely face some hard questions regarding how he intends to resolve the "Hello Garci" scandal—the case of the President and an election official caught on tape discussing a million-vote election fraud.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a member of the bicameral CA, has made it known that he supports Melo to reopen the "Hello Garci" scandal once he takes over the Comelec.

Congress OKs budget after realigning funds

By Norman Bordadora

CONGRESS' BICAMERAL COMMITTEE tackling the proposed 2008 budget slashed P38.13 billion from the national expenditure program's allocations for debt servicing, slow-moving projects and miscellaneous expenses, and raised allotments for agencies involved in social services such as health and education.

Thereafter, the panel, headed by House committee on appropriations chair Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman and Senate committee on finance chair Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, finally agreed on a reconciled version of the P1.227 trillion General Appropriations Bill.

The House and Senate last night ratified the bicameral committee report on the budget which will be sent to President Macapagal-Arroyo for signing.

The bicam cut almost P20 billion from the senators' allocation for debt servicing, equivalent to about half of the total budget—despite threats of a filibustering vote.

The panel also realized the more than P600-billion outlay for debt interest payments by P20.9 billion, which was much higher than the P17.6-billion slash proposed by the House and the P6-billion cut demanded by the Senate.

Lagman said it was the first time in almost a decade that the allocations for debt interest payments was cut to augment the appropriations for health, education, agriculture, social welfare, infrastructure, local government and development, justice and the judiciary, labor and employment, energy, environment, and public safety and security.

The panel also cut P12.836 billion from the proposed allocations for slow-moving projects, excess allowances and other miscellaneous allowances.

The committee praised the proposal even as Malacañang, through Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, threatened a veto if President Macapagal-Arroyo if Congress failed to restore the allocations for debt servicing.

More budget for basic services

"Congress in the reconciled appropriations bill goes more flesh to the President's budget message of 'Sustaining the Momentum of Growth' by increasing the government's budget for basic services and infrastructure development to feed the demands of both the masses and the investors," Lagman said.

The total reduction of P38.1 billion from the debt service and the other allocations were realigned to the budgets of agencies and programs involved in social and government services. The realignment increased their allocations proposed by the President.

The allocations for infrastructure were increased by P1.2 981 billion—the highest—for a new total appropriation of P94.720 billion.

Agencies involved in health, education and agriculture were the next biggest beneficiaries of the realignment, with increases of P1.798 billion, P4.629 billion and P1.872 billion respectively.

Basic and higher education received an augmented new appropriation of P138.002 billion; health, P21.447 billion; and agriculture, P29.104 billion.

Lagman said space development got the highest percentage increase at 61 percent or P6 million in real terms. He said this was in line with the Filipino athlete's quest for a gold medal in the Beijing Olympics in August. With oil (subcategory

Slightly fewer Filipinos are food-poor, survey says

A RECORD LOW OF 24 percent of Filipinos are suffering their belly and eating less.

According to the latest Social Weather Stations survey, some 5.1 million households, or 24 percent of Filipino families in the last quarter of 2007, said they considered themselves poor in terms of food.

The figure was the lowest recorded since June 2004, when 35 percent of Filipino families said they were food poor.

The Fourth Quarter Social Weather Survey also showed signs that many Filipinos have been "self-rationing," or lowering their standard of living to cope with the hard times.

The survey, conducted from Nov. 30 to Dec. 3, 2007, asked 1,200 adult household heads from all over the country to rate their families based on the type of food they eat and to rate themselves as poor, not poor, or somewhere in between.

Lower standards

Thirty-four percent said they were food poor, another 24 percent said they were not, and the remaining 32 percent put themselves on the border line.

By region, Self-rated food poverty declined in Mindanao (from 39 percent in September 2007 to 29 percent but December), Metro Manila (from 23 to 20 percent) and in Luzon (from 41 to 31 percent), but remained steady in the Visayas (from 30 to 32 percent).

Respondents were also asked: "In your opinion, how much money would your family need for food expenses each month in order not to be called poor (magmumukha)?"

SWS found that the food poverty threshold for those who considered themselves food-poor [illegible] in September to P3,000 in December) and Metro Manila (from P4,500 to P5,000), [illegible] Mindanao (from P3,000 to P3,500), and in the Visayas (from P3,000 to P3,500).

"Those levels had already been crushed and surpassed several years ago," SWS noted. (Jyrell L. Bernabe.rec, Inquirer Research)

COPW supports the
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On January 29, 30, 31 & February 5, 2008
At the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia Complex,
Roxas Boulevard

The Summit's Theme:
"U.S. $ 100.00 per Barrel:
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Summit participants will tackle the issues on ways to a avert a crisis in the short term and seize the opportunity to seek new approaches to accelerate the development of alternative fuels and other sources of energy as well as the adoption of creative solutions by sector and citizens groups.

The Summit will bring together representatives from various sectors: energy and oil, transport industry, agriculture, consumers, exporters, national government agencies, Congress, non-governmental organizations, the academe, local government units, technology suppliers & international funding and technical partners.

This Summit is essential in surfacing aligning perspectives on the most pressing energy issues affecting the consumer sector.

The Consumer and Oil Price Watch enjoins all concerned to attend and actively participate in this very crucial endeavor.

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CENTRE

Jpepa bad for Pinoys, says Japanese pastor

By Gemmalou Lacorte
Inquirer Mindanao

SAMAL CITY—KUSAKI, Al (nice and kikw- (hard, dirty and dangerous).

This was how Rev. Isamu Kushiki, a member of the Nagasaki Christian Churches of Japan (NCCJ), described the kinds of jobs offered by Japan to Filipino workers in exchange for major fishing rights and trade concessions under the Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa).

He said free flow was no reason for Filipinos to be happy about the job prospects offered by Jpepa, describing it as a "kind of slavery."

Kushiki is one of 33 Japanese pastors who attended a five-day bilateral conference with the ecclesiastical National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP) here, and who are leading their women in the church-led campaign to stop the Senate from ratifying the Jpepa.

Facing the press at the end of the conference, Kushiki and Fr. John Yuji Isamaki, chair of the NCCJ Philippine committee, said they were worried that Jpepa—already ratified by the Japanese parliament—"might take away what little is left for small fishermen and farmers in the us."

After a visit to banana plantations in Compostela Valley and tuna packing plants and fishing villages in General Santos and Zamboanga, the Japanese pastors said they agreed with their Philippine colleagues that Jpepa was one-sided.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has urged the Senate to ratify the trade pact, which the said will facilitate and promote the free flow of goods, persons, services and capital between the Philippines and Japan by reducing or eliminating tariffs on almost all industrial goods. A provision which would allow Filipino nurses and caregivers to work in Japan was another provision trumpeted by government negotiators.

Anti-Jpepa allies

The jobs of caretakers and nurses are known in Japan as the three D's," Kushiki said, referring to the above description. "These are jobs that most people hate. These are jobs most people do not want to do because they are very hard and they pay very low."

On the other hand, the Japanese pastor said allowing Japanese big business to enter Philippine fishing and packing, for instance, may wipe out the livelihood of small Filipino fishermen.

For instance, in General Santos, fishermen may still be using "hard-hitting" methods and very old fishing, but which still is a "sufficient way for them to survive," Kushiki said. "Once the Japanese vessels start coming in with their very big nets, the fishermen may no longer be able to lay their hands on the fish, they will have to buy the fish in cans."

"It's a kind of jobs but it's not a jobs," he said. "It's a very serious story. I don't know exactly what will happen after the agreement comes but I know the variety of other countries in the South Pacific."

CAVITE BLAST KILLS 1

Police inspect the remains of a 3-door apartment in Barangay Maduro, Rosario, Cavite, where three persons were killed Monday night when explosives were found heading to the suspicious explosives were being manufactured in the building. (Story in Nonstop, Page A14.)

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 23 ISSUE, an Across the Nation article—"8,700 overseeing 1,300 more men in Basil arena"—misstated that members of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (or Reaction Brigades of the Barangay Protection, a PBSU (Philippine Business for Education) statement read: "In reality, teachers are not just teachers. They are classroom managers."

THE SAME STORY misstated that PBSU chair Ramon del Rosario Jr. quoted French author Jacques Barzun who said: "Teaching is not a lost art, but the reward for it is a lost tradition." Del Rosario did not quote Barzun.

Readers may send their requests for corrections or factual errors in articles to the Ask Ombi, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PSI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati Ave., Makati City, fax nos. 897-67-93/894-9208, e-mail address: ask.ombi@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Letters Editor Tina Arceo-Dumlao, e-mail address: tina@inquirer.com.ph or fax No. 897-67-92/94. Attn: Sheldy Adriano. For phone number, see page 2.

Ping: Palace got to witness

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BUSINESS INTERESTS of the Senate hearing on the ZTE Corp.-National Broadband Network (ZTE-NBN) deal has "fanned out" due to pressure from Malacañang in the Eastern Visayas and Aurora.

The sun-scorched provinces are host, Sandra "Ping" Lacson who blamed that ebbing committee chair Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano for prematurely disbanding the identity of the witness, Rodolfo "Rudi" L. Lozada Jr., president and CEO of Philippine Asset Corp.

Cayetano has denied Lacson's claim, saying the subpoena issued to Lozada, reportedly a close associate of former National Economic and Development Authority Director General Romulo Neri, was a public document which made it inevitable his name would come out.

Cayetano said the ZTE-NBN hearing would resume at 10 a.m. tomorrow even without Lozada since the original subpoena issued to the controversy, how "busy" the Senate is, had confirmed his attendance and his willingness to tell more about the alleged bribes and other transactions that ruin of the project.

Cayetano said his committee was determined to pursue the investigation even though Neri had petitioned the Supreme Court to stop the Senate from compelling him to appear before the chamber and talk about the ZTE-NBN deal.

Cayetano said the Senate had yet to decide as a group whether or not to declare Neri in contempt for having snubbed the Senate's summons.

"He's [Lozada] backing out. He has never vowed some out.

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THE TRUE TESDAns SPEAK OUT!

Republic of the Philippines
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
Association of Concerned Employees-National Council
(an affiliate of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines or TUCP)

Resolution No. 01-06

A Resolution adopting the collective position of the TESDA-ACE-TUCP on the issues Facing TESDA and the Rank and File Employees

WHEREAS, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority Association of Concerned Employees (TESDA-ACE-TUCP) National Council held its special meeting on January 31, 2006 at Malolos, Bulacan;

WHEREAS, the TESDA-ACE-TUCP is the ONLY RECOGNIZED employees union in TESDA, REPRESENTING SOME 1,00 EMPLOYEES, duly registered and accredited with the Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC), and affiliated with the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP);

WHEREAS, the TESDA-ACE National Council is the legislative and policy-making body of the Union;

WHEREAS, the TESDA-ACE-TUCP, faithfully adhering to the mandate of its Constitution and By-Laws to represent the rank-and-file in collective negotiations with management and in other issues and interests that affect its members collectively;

WHEREAS, the TESDA-ACE-TUCP, is DEEPLY PAINED and roiled with utmost concern the filing of Senate Bill 593 which proposes the abolition of TESDA for its alleged failure to develop skills required by industry;

WHEREAS, the TESDA-ACE-TUCP, while recognizing the right and responsibility of every TESDA employee to expose wrongdoings committed by any officer of the agency, vehemently REJECTS PUBLIC POSSIVE BAMPILITATION AND SENSATIONALISM of issues which undermines the good name of TESDA, its officers and employees especially in pursuit of personal interests;

WHEREAS, the TESDA-ACE-TUCP considers continuous barrage of press releases which has resulted to the proposal to the abolition of TESDA, as mere allegations of a DISGRUNTLED FEW who do not represent the collective will of TESDA employees and that such press statements are inimical to TESDA and has tarnished the morale of the rank-and-file who often work beyond the call of duty;

Therefore, be it resolved:

To express TESDA-ACE-TUCP'S outright rejection of proposal to abolish TESDA;

To appeal to lawmakers, particularly to the good Senator Joseph "Jinggoy" Estrada not to rush judgment on the performance of TESDA and consider the important role TESDA plays in providing skills training to the poor, promoting employment, partnership with industries, NGOs, peoples organizations, trade unions and BPMs, and the many sacrifices of its officer and employees;

To SUPPORT AND CONTINUE all programs and services with renewed vigor and commitment to develop technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the country UNDER THE LEADERSHIP AND GUIDANCE OF THE CURRENT TESDA DIRECTOR GENERAL, particularly his advocacy for the Lasallerized Education Program and the Training for Work Scholarship Programs;

To reject any and all actions, statements and manipulations, of the few who have put personal interest above the call of duty and commitment to TVET education for their own selfish and divisive interests;

RESOLVED FINALLY, that copy of this resolution to disseminated to all concerned for their information.

Done this 31st of January 2006

Certified True and Correct

THIS AD HAS BEEN PAID FOR BY TUCP

Erap can keep personal property, court decides

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SANDIGANBAYAN TUESDAY said it would not run after deposed President Joseph Estrada's personal property in putting him to account for the roughly P500 million he illegally amassed during his term.

But the anti-graft court's Special Division emphasized that in the event that the amounts forfeiture were insufficient or missing, its sheriff could seize all forms of assets "traceable" to the Erap Muslim Foundation and the loan broker accounts.

The court said these included "but were not limited" to the P1.1-billion worth of assets believed to be Estrada's that the Sandiganbayan Sheriff's Office earlier found to be intact in Equitable PCIBank, now Banco de Oro (BPI) Inc.

The assets held in trust as of Oct. 2, 2000, consist of a promissory note and diluted mortgage worth P800 million, 490 million shares in Wiseman Philippines (now valued at P427.5 million at P0.9/share); 500 million shares in Wellex Industries (now valued at P84 million at P0.26/share) and a common trust fund investment amounting to P95.750 million, according to the bank.

Big slap

"This is a big slap in the face of the prosecution who continues to brandish my name," Estrada yesterday said in a phone interview.

After Estrada was convicted of plunder on Sept. 12 last year, Edgardo Udarbe, the court's chief sheriff, was ordered to seize in favor of the government FIRST million in the "Jose Velarde" account, which the court adjudged to belong to Estrada, and P545,239 million in his Erap Muslim Youth Foundation.

Of the P843.291 million in the foundation, the sheriff's office has recovered some P233 million but is still searching for the balance of about P610 million.

The sheriff was also directed to forfeit the so-called "Boracay Mansion" in New Manila, Quezon City, previously owned by the former president and gifted to one of his mistresses.

The Sandiganbayan says, issued on Oct. 30 and Nov. 5, also stated that the court could seize Estrada's properties that were disposable and not covered by the sanction if he could not pay all or part of his obligations.

Estrada sought to quash these orders, arguing that they were beyond the dispositive portion of the decision.

In a nine-page resolution that partially granted his motion, the court reminded government lawyers' claim that the anti-plunder law did not limit the forfeiture to any and all ill-gotten wealth and their interest but extended to "other income and assets."

"The court is not persuaded ... the provision of Section 2 [of the law] must be interpreted in its entirety and cannot be confined to words and phrases which are taken out of context," it said.

Estrada spends extra day in HK shopping, strolling

By Jocelyn R. Uy

HE SHOPPED FOR DELICACIES, was wined and dined by Chinese businessmen, and strolled around the commercial district of Hong Kong. This was how deposed President Joseph Estrada spent his extra day in the Chinese Territory yesterday.

The 73-year-old Estrada and his wife, Sen. Luisa Ejercito, were supposed to return to the Philippines yesterday from their five overseas trip since he was pardoned by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo after the Sandiganbayan convicted him of plunder in September last year.

Estrada decided to extend the trip for a day of shopping, sampling Hong Kong cuisine and sight-seeing.

The statesman threw all airport personnel prepared to welcome and usher Estrada as they waited in vain for his arrival at the diplomatic lounge of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1 until late afternoon yesterday.

First time to roam

Estrada had been booked to fly home aboard Cathay Pacific CX-902, due to arrive at 5:30 p.m. yesterday. But Estrada himself confirmed that he had decided to delay his return.

Estrada and his wife flew to Hong Kong to attend the wedding of the children of Chinese tycoons Dante Go and Robert Coyiuto. They will take the last Cathay Pacific flight tonight, according to Benito Ramos, Estrada's spokesperson.

"I've decided to stay for one more day because this is my very first time to roam around the territory," Estrada said in a phone interview with the business tycoons.

He said he could not remember legally entering a trip he had taken even when he was president, noting that an official trip was usually limited to the hotel and the place of his engagement. "I did not have time to shop," he said.

With Reuters/Jumamil

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CBCP: Trafficking in human organs 'morally unacceptable'

By Beverly T. Mendoza

PHILIPPINE BISHOPS YESTERDAY condemned as "morally unacceptable" the trafficking in human organs.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said in a pastoral statement that despite the existence of Liver Law governing organ donation, the same penalties for selling "diseased and exploited" bodily or the organs of the economically poor.

While there are prohibitions to health-care professionals and facilities, selling organs has been on the rise because of high demand here and abroad. Lack of access to good renal care and the steep price of getting life-prolonging dialysis have also increased the demand.

The high price fetched by organ donation has led many of the poor to sell their organs.

"We condemn any form of organ sale and organ trade," the bishops said. "Human organ sale or trade, by its very nature is morally unacceptable."

The prelates said that they were not condemning the poor who resorted to the immoral trade out of a dire financial need.

Bishop Broderick Pabillo, also chairs the CBCP Office on Migrants, said that while the "middle men" who broker the sale of organs of the poor for financial gain.

"We understand the poor and they should not be blamed. There are other ways to help them but not through organ sale. They are human beings and they cannot be treated as commodities," said the pastoral statement.

The bishops also recommended that the government impose stricter laws against the selling of organs. They said the government should try to control organ donation by putting local recipients at the top of the waiting list before any foreign recipient.

"A strict limit on allowable donations is not far from organ trade," the statement said.

Bishops seek 'closure' to 'Hello Garci'

From page A1

statement issued at the close of its two-day Manila plenary assembly.

The pastoral [illegible] three-page statement signed by CBCP president Angel Lagdameo said, was "through of the urgency of closure to the issue for public well being in order to the truth and true closure to the issue."

Archbishop Antonio Ledesma said in a press conference later that the CBCP was hopeful that former Supreme Court Justice Artemio V. Panganiban, Fidel Ramos appointed Comelec chair, would reopen the suit stopping controversy.

"We are confident that new Justice Department will look into that and [illegible] to bring about that closure because the present public and all of us are still reading for some resolution of the questions that have been raised," Ledesma said.

Mrs. Arroyo, who is in Singapore for medical treatment, has denied any involvement in the 2004 presidential balloting and rejected the credibility of the tapes.

Former Supreme Court Justice Vicente Mendoza said he had no objection to the reopening of the inquiry but it could not turn all up to Mrs. Arroyo. He also said the petition was the proliferation of audiotapes and downloading which one of them was "authentic."

Tapes purportedly containing conversations between President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano during the counting of votes in the 2004 presidential election surfaced in 2005. The opposition said the tapes were evidence Mrs. Arroyo rigged the ballot[illegible]—a charge she has steadfastly denied.

The controversy prompted calls for Mrs. Arroyo's resignation and two impeachment attempts in Congress, which her allies quickly killed.

In a pastoral letter issued in January 2006, the CBCP urged Mrs. Arroyo to pursue relentlessly the truth behind the "Hello Garci" scandal. Before the May 2007 elections, the prelates also warned that the country could ill afford another election controversy.

Moral bankruptcy

In the three-page statement yesterday the 130-member CBCP said: "That the political order is strained [illegible] of moral bankruptcy with many an exception is a sad sign of the general cynicism and frustration of our people. Most unfortunately, there does not seem to be any way of relieving this state. For the process and results of mandated democratic inquiries, sometimes including those by the Supreme Court, are received with skepticism and mistrust."

"We have to confess that corruption is as [illegible] our greatest shame as a people," it added.

The CBCP outlined problems which it said had been brought to its attention, including the pervasiveness that corruption is now "a norm," fears that martial law would be imposed as a response to coup threats, constant talk of amending the Constitution as a means of maintaining power, extrajudicial executions and the establishment of a communal ID system to control "unruly sectors of society."

In the countryside, the CBCP said concerns centered on the aggravation of the poor against the civilian-military tandem, political ramifications of several Filipino workers and executions of extrajudicial killings, lack of support for the land reform program, the communist and Muslim insurgencies, abuse of natural resources, the alienation and frustration of our people [illegible] there does not seem to be any way of relieving this state. For the process and results of mandated democratic inquiries, sometimes including those by the Supreme Court, are received with skepticism and mistrust.

UP studes fight cigarette ads

By Kristine L. Alave

ABOUT 100 STUDENTS FROM THE UNIversity of the Philippines yesterday asked Judge Alex Gutierrez of the Manila Regional Trial Court to reconsider her decision disallowing them from participating in "forbreezing" in the outdoor advertising case between the government and tobacco firms.

Therefore To, the students' lawyer, said the students should be given their day in court to air their objection to the posting of cigarette billboards ads on street beams. They said the students have a legal stake in the case, he argued.

The civil case questions the legality of the tobacco firms' outdoor advertising. The government's letter agency Consumer on Tobacco and the Framework Convention of Tobacco Control Alliance Philippines want the tobacco companies to take down their billboards and posters from store fronts in line with Republic Act No. 9211 which bans cigarette advertising outside "points of sale."

Partner Tobacco Corp., however, sought the court's reinterpretation of the law, saying billboards mounted on streets should be exempt from the ban as these are found "inside the premises" of the stores.

Gutierrez earlier junked the students' petition for intervention in August 2007, saying they were not a party in the case. Lawyers for the tobacco firms had argued that the students were already represented by the government.

But the students petitioners filed a motion for reconsideration. "Certainly, the students have a legal interest in the case. They form a part of the youth that is the target market of the advertising that Petitioner Tobacco would wish to expand," he said.

As cigarette smoking is considered a "global epidemic" by health organizations, To said students, who form part of the "nonpuffers' cigarette market, deserve to be heard in court.

The student petitioners, mostly from the UP College of Law, said the tobacco companies were imploding on RA 9211 and violating the spirit of the law.

Stay indoors, Pinoys in Lebanon told

By TJ Burgonio

BEIRUT, SYRIA PLUS—AMBASsador Roy Cimatu on Sunday night advised Filipinos in Lebanon to stay indoors in the next few days of violent clashes in the capital that has left eight people dead.

Cimatu, special envoy to the Middle East, was set to fly to Beirut on Monday to secure the evacuees. He said a team was ready to evacuate Filipinos in the event of violence escalated.

"Our advisory is that they stay indoors. Don't go out for the moment in the streets and don't go to crowded places, especially places of protests," he told reporters here.

No casualty reports

As of Sunday night, there were no reports of casualties among the estimated 25,000 Filipinos, mostly domestic helpers, who work and live in Lebanon, Cimatu said.

Hundreds of Shiite Muslims protesting the military coup entered in Beirut Sunday, clashing with government troops and killing eight people.

It was the worst existing since Shiite and Sunni Muslims battled in January 2007 in which four people died, according to reports.

Cimatu, who welcomed President Gloriapal Arroyo in Dubai on Saturday night, said his "biggest worry" was that the fighting would spill over to Syria and Filipinos caught be "caught in the middle" if the violence escalated.

"Yes, that is when I'm worried [about]. Because you know a Filipino is working with this group, another Filipino is working with that group. If the two groups fight, they will be caught in the middle," he said.

The ambassador, however, said there was no reason to panic or get because the Lebanese Army was "in control."

He said the Philippine government had a plan ready to evacuate the Filipinos "out of harm's way" if it became necessary.

"We are ready to evacuate them if it dishes into [evacuees or another] real war," he told reporters in the Manila International Airport.

Cimatu said he was going to evacuate Filipinos to Beirut.

"We are going there to provide some information [for them] to be vigilant and avoid this street violence," he said.

Body found in Canada was Filipino worker's

By Cynthia D. Balana

CANADIAN AUTHORITIES have positively identified the battered body that was found by police last week near a farm owner in Calgary as that of Filipino worker Arcelie Lasagan, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

Citing a report from ambassador to Canada Jose Brillantes, the DFA said the Calgary Police Service identified Lasagan, 41, the night her fingerprints.

Lasagan was found dead near the Franklin C-Train station last Jan. 18. An arrest has been made in the case.

DFA spokesperson Claro Cristobal said the Philippine embassy and the honorary consul in Calgary, Philadelphia Estes, are very closely following the case and would provide assistance to Lasagan's family.

The Calgary Herald, in a story on Jan. 25, reported that Lasagan's family and other community support unit—flowers and hugged each other when Calgary police showed up at the memorial to explain and announced they had made an arrest.

The paper said a man in his early 20s was taken into custody Thursday afternoon, and hours before hundreds of mourners filed into a church to bid Lasagan farewell.

The report quoted the police as saying the violent attack occurred on set.

Lasagan, a mother of five who had been working in Calgary to support her family in the Philippines, was declared beyond resuscitation at the attack. It allowed to have occurred on Jan. 17.

Final movements

Lasagan's body was released Thursday morning and is expected to be flown back to the Philippines for burial.

Lasagan's final movements were caught by a surveillance camera. Investigators believe she got on the LRT at the 8th Street S.W. station and got off at the Franklin station. The body was found by a passerby early on Jan. 18 on a well-travelled pathway the Franklin station.

Police have been asking anyone who may have seen her on the southbound leg of the Mcknight-Westwinds C-Train between 10 and 11 p.m. to contact them.

Lasagan spent her last days at the Calgary Public Library with a friend, surfing the Internet for a good deal on a used car.

She was supposed to see Arcelie Lasagan's husband, the brown purse was not found with her body.

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Thursday, January 24, 2008
3rd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 2 S 6: 12b-15, 17-19
Gospel: Mk 3:31-35

Jesus' mother and brothers come. As they stood outside, they sent someone to call him. The crowd sitting around him told him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you." He replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?"

And looking around at those who sat close by, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me."

Commentary

Jesus draws our full attention to the Blessed Mother in today's Gospel passage. Indeed, he affirms Mary as a role model for each of us. He will contrast the Word of God over his family and even completed all he will. What else did somebody see our mark in the gospel? Answer: Mary lived God's Word by reading the Bible on a daily basis, and by putting what Word into practice in our daily living.

How blessed is she who is so close to Jesus as to be considered part of his family!

Media ask SC to stop gov't threats, arrests

From page A1

hours after filing the petition with the high court, the journalists yesterday won a crucial first victory in their fight to defend their freedom to report when a Manila judge granted their separate petitions to restrain government officials from arresting or threatening media members.

The temporary restraining order issued by the Makati court was to last for 72 hours.

The Makati petition was part of a class action suit filed by the journalists seeking damages of P10 million from government, police and military officials for press freedom violations.

A model for all

"The world is watching. What happens in this case will become a model for other countries and other journalists in the entire universe," said Luis Teodoro of the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR).

ABS-CBN's Ilocos and Cagayan Adjutant-in-Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon, PNP National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) Director Roney Baraan and PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) head Chief Supt. Asher Dobiña.

"There are numerous issues for the press," CMFR's Teodoro said. "Unless we do something about it, the next crisis situation will see journalists again arrested or ... charged with disorderly conduct or some other early offense reminiscent of the martial law days all of us remember."

'Barrage of threats'

The journalists said their petition was unique "because the highest justice, police and military officials of the state have unleashed a barrage of threats and warnings against the press, ranging from arrest, criminal prosecution and criminal liability to the revision of franchises and violations of a Mideast Peninsula Commission on Good Conduct banning the broadcast of rebel-bias terrorist propaganda."

They noted the threats came right after the Peninsula Manila incident.

While the threats died down in the latter part of December, the journalists said these had resumed and even stepped up since the beginning of the month with conservative warnings from Gonzalez and Razon.

Public's right to know

"Threats are easy to make. When the government makes threats, their intent cause problematic because it has the coercive power to back those threats," said the petitioners' lawyer, Jose Manuel Diokno.

Diokno added: "More than press freedom, this case is about the right of the people to information. The public suffers when the information that could save lives is withheld by the media because of censorship and prior restraint."

Gonzalez had issued an advisory reminding media networks and companies to obey lawful orders from government officers or incur criminal liabilities.

Razon, for his part, had warned reporters that they could face obstruction of justice charges if they defied police instructions during operations.

The PNP chief also resented an unnamed reporter of hedging deadline Marine Capt. Rudeser Feddiken to open during the standoff, when rebel soldiers called for the composition of the Armed.

Media rights disregarded

Without this Honorable Court's support, mere soldiers, politicians and other journalists will suffer gross injustice and irreparable injury from acts that are plainly against the Constitution," the petition said.

The petitioners also said that the respondents' threats had placed painfully their freedom of journalists as co-partners, calls to the exercise by the Honorable Court of its power of supervision to protect basic rights and freedoms," the petition said.

The journalists appealed to the high court to prohibit the respondents from issuing unauthorized advisory from carrying out their public warnings and threats of arrest or revocation of franchise, and from issuing further warnings and threats to the press.

The petitioners also asked the high court to stop government officials from publicly demeaning journalists as coddlers or protectors of rebels; imposing any direct or indirect form of prior restraints on the press; and arresting journalists as combatants during military or police operations.

"When the state arrests journalists for covering a newsworthy event, then intimidates a barrage of threats of arrests and criminal prosecution, the state is no longer preventing criminal activity but engaging in censorship and prior restraint—acts that the state cannot respect, not outside, under our Constitution," the petitioners said.

They accused "journalists cannot report from inside a prison cell."

Judge Dumayas

In his three-page ruling, Makati Executive Judge Winlove Dumayas granted the journalists' prayer for a Tedeora TRO enjoining Cabinet members, police and military officials from making threats of arrests against journalists.

The judge said he was granting the TRO after considering its extreme urgency, adding that "great and irreparable injury" would result otherwise.

Dumayas also set the case for raffle on "Tuesday, upon which the case would be taken up by another judge who would decide whether to extend the TRO.

The class action suit filed by 30 individual journalists and four media groups sought P5 million in moral damages, P1 million in exemplary damages and P500,000 in actual damages.

Among the plaintiffs were five journalists who were detained after the Peninsula incident, namely Ellen Tordesillas and Ashief Macliwo of Malaya; James Calvert of Manila Times; Christopher Bjorkman of the Japanese Communist Party agency AFRC; and Leah Navarro of the Philippine Cable Television.

Represented by their respective heads, the media organizations that joined the petition included the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism and the Philippine Press Institute. With a report from Augusto Boncocan

Cops arrest leader of farmers' group

By Carlo M. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas and Nikko Dizon, InMindoro

BACOLOD CITY—A TOP LEADER OF A militant farmers' group was arrested on multiple murder charges by policemen yesterday at Iloilo City.

Randall Echanis, 60, national deputy secretary general of the Effusing Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), was taken by policemen at the Builders Training Center in Barangay Calumangan in Roger at 2:30 p.m.

Senior Supt. Rosendo Franco, Negros Occidental police director, said Echanis was a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) Central Committee. Investigators, however, were still validating Echanis' membership in the CPP, he said.

Echanis was arrested, along with CPP founding chair Jose Ma. Sison and Bayan (Mass Response Group), of multiple murder for 15 counts in connection with the mass graves discovered in Bilangan, Leyte, last year, according to Cordoba, CMP public relations officer.

Also, Senior Inspector Eduardo Acierto of Leyte police said in the affidavit issued to the nine detained in Camp Brigadier in Tagaig City at the time these murders were supposedly committed.

In Manila, the Public Interest Law Center (PILC), which represents Echanis, blamed his arrest on Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

"This is part of Esperon's scheme to cover up that he's going to coordinate on the legal left! ... This is the beginning of the bloody (four-month period of his extended term," the PILC said.

Air interviewed that Echanis was not a communist leader but a KMP official only were in Negros for consultations in preparation for a national social congress.

Franco said the arrest was based on a warrant issued by Judge Ephesio Abundo of Bilangan.

Echanis is also facing charges of kidnapping in Tagaig province City and illegal possession of firearms in Manila, he said.

Olympus was the only one among the accused who posted a P100,000 bail in February last year. But the PILC said that for the past 11 months, all of the other accused were "not treated," resulting in legitimate concern among relatives that some were tortured.

"None of them were into hiding. But after a sudden, one of them is arrested," it said.

Bad news for RP's Ms Tapias

From page A1

position of the entire teacher population in the country.

"Only about 7 percent of DepEd teachers are male," said Education Secretary Jesli Lapus, who spoke at a press conference in Makati on Jan. 28.

Based on these estimates, there could be fewer than 30,000 men out of the 400,000 in DepEd's pool of teachers, not including nonteaching staff and personnel.

The education secretary said the teaching profession had been traditionally female and hence male high school graduates were the years, as evidenced by the shortage of male teachers.

For Lapus, this is not a healthy sign.

Role models

"Teachers are supposed to be schoolchildren's second parents. But in schools, most of the role models are women," he said.

Lapus said schoolchildren need to interacting with women teachers should also be exposed to men whose authority figures so they could learn values from them. (He did not elaborate on what those are.)

"In the 1950s and 1960s, there were higher levels of male enrollment in teaching schools. But this has been dropping over the years," he said.

Trend in other countries

But trend size has been observed in other countries, he noted.

"That's because men are treated by the bureaucracy and they're forced to take jobs, like going abroad where they can earn a higher salary," Lapus said.

"Women, on the other hand, often decide to become teachers because even though the salary is not high, it is stable," said Chito Salazar, executive director of the Philippine Business for Education (PBEd).

Lapus earlier also hedged that the DepEd had no means of attracting male high school graduates.

"We can't discriminate. We can't offer them higher salaries," he said during an interview at the launch of PBEd's 1,000 Teachers Program, an initiative aims to attract the best graduates into becoming teachers.

Scholarship, stipend

The DepEd said the 1,000 Teachers Program would sponsor, through the support of partner schools and companies, the college education of some of the best graduating high school students through a full scholarship grant with stipends.

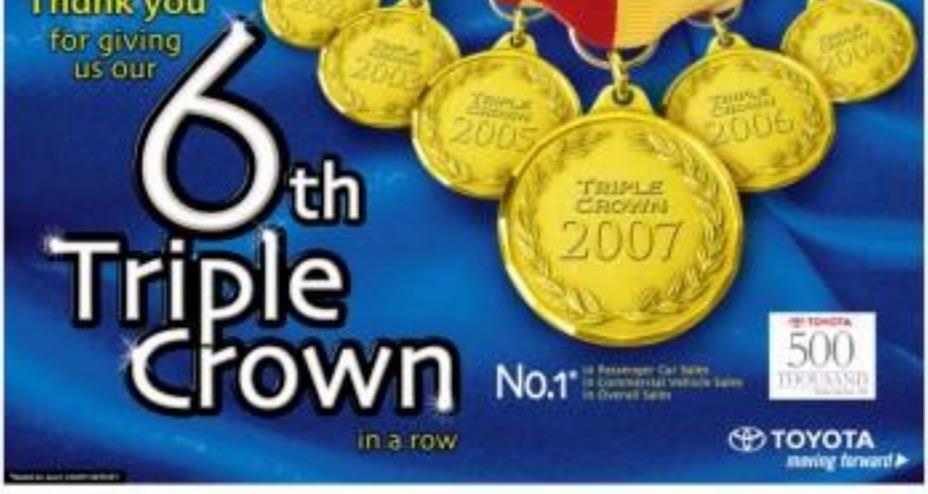
Successful applicants, who shall be required to take up education and major in English, Math or Science, will receive a monthly allowance of P2,000 for 10 months of each school year, and a book stipend of P2,000 per semester.

In return, they are expected to go back to their home provinces to teach in a public school for at least five years before considering other options.

Lapus said program like 1,000 Teachers could help to attain the positive image of teaching especially among young men and encourage the best graduates to take up education courses. schools, especially those in core need of more hands for teachers, classrooms and textbooks.

He said PBED's advertising campaign featuring six equal members of male and female teachers would help young people identify more with teachers.

Salazar said the 1,000 Teachers Program would not have any preferable bias for male applicants, but added that gender balance in the teacher population should be addressed subsequently by all sectors.



Cabbies drop fare petition

THE PHILIPPINE National Taxi Operators Association (PNTOA) has dropped its petition for a taxi hike, declaring instead a short P5.00 off the "boundary" fare charged drivers to rent their cabs.

The amount of the boundary varies depending on the model, condition and unit to keep the vehicle running. Boundaries generally range from P900 to P1,300 per day. Anything a driver makes above that he keeps.

"Just like in 2003, when taxi operators decided to shift to LPG [liquefied petroleum gas] from gasoline to cope with the fuel price hikes, we decided on our own initiative to spare the consumers from additional burdens," said PNTOA president Rong Santay in an interview on the sidelines of the Transport Summit held at the Isles Shangri-La hotel in Mandaluyong City yesterday.

"At the same time, we know that increasing the fare [while] maybe by the 15% of price hikes would shrink the income of the drivers. So we decided to raise our boundary rates instead," Santay said.

Earlier this year, the operators told the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) that they wanted to raise the flag down rate to P40 from the current P30 and keep the rate per kilometer at P2.50.

This was not the first time the PNTOA abandoned a taxi hike petition in favor of other means of reducing losses.

In 2005, the operators convinced then LTFRB chief to set a cost of P20,000 to P40,000 per unit.

Elena P. Olchondra

SC: Circular on libel stays

By Lala R. Salamero

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY REjected calls to withdraw the circular urging judges to more out-of-line instead of jail time for persons convicted of libel.

Supreme Court spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez at the same time countered allegations by President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief legal counsel, Sergio Apostol, who said the circular unlawfully amended the libel law and that it was issued without a hearing.

Marquez said all justices of the high court were unified decision to come out with the circular titled "Guidelines in the observance of a rule of preference in the imposition of penalties in libel cases."

The court en banc also thought "a hearing was not necessary," he said. "The penalty was a view. Doesn't that [we] were [entitled]. The court cited four cases where that was [applied]."

Marquez also rejected Apostol's claim the circular favored members of the media. He said the circular would apply to everybody.

"It's not favoring one particular group over another. The cases are cited did not involve any journalists. They involved a government employee, a lawyer, a local politician, an official of a homeowners' association," he said.

Aside from Apostol, Sen. Jinkee Arroyo also expressed misgivings about the Supreme Court circular.

Arroyo said Chief Justice Reynato Puno acted "exquisitely" in handling it down, adding that it could be "misconstrued unfairly as preempting what Congress should do."

There are pending bills to decriminalize libel.

Marquez said the circular did not amend the law, adding that other circulars had been issued in the past, for example, the Rotating Check Law. He, there were no calls to take back the circular, he noted.

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Holcim Awards Competition

Building new perspectives for our future

Holcim looks forward to entries to the second Holcim Awards competition to promote sustainable construction. Entries in the USD 2 million competition must be in English and can be submitted until February 29, 2008 at http://www.holcimawards.org.

The global competition encompasses responses to technological, environmental, socioeconomic and cultural issues affecting contemporary building and construction. The Awards are open to anyone involved with projects in the area of sustainable construction architects, planners, engineers, or project owners.

All building projects are eligible for the competition if construction had not started before June 1, 2007, or only if it is in an advanced stage of design.

The first phase of the competition will select regional winners in 2008 that will automatically qualify for the global competition in the next in 2009. In addition to construction projects at an advanced stage of design, the Awards competition seeks visions and ideas at a conceptual level. This special category is open for professionals younger than 35 years of age.

The Awards are an initiative of the Swiss-based Holcim Foundation to encourage and inspire a built environment that goes beyond convention to address challenges of sustainability.

Five regional competitions are conducted in Asia Pacific, Africa Middle East, Europe, Latin America and North America. The Holcim Awards are run in cooperation with approximately 60 Holcim Group companies in just as many countries.

Submissions to the Awards are evaluated by independent juries in five regions of the world, using a five point definition of sustainable construction. These so-called "target issues" align with the primary goals of the Rio Agenda: balanced environmental, social and economic performance. One target issue applies specifically to building: the creation of ghosts to buildings, neighborhoods, towns and cities. Another recognizes the need for significant advancements that can be applied on a broad scale: ecological quality and energy conservation; economic performance and compatibility; ethical standards and social equity; contextual and aesthetic impact; and quantum change and transferability.

The Holcim Awards are held in partnership with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich), Switzerland; the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, USA; Tongji University, Shanghai, China; the Universidad Iberoamericana (UIA) in Mexico City, Mexico; and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg, South Africa. The Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Brazil is an associated university of the Holcim Foundation. The universities define the evaluation criteria and head the independent juries.

The global award will be open to the regional award winners in 2009. The juries will be headed by internationally renowned architects and academics engaged in the sustainable development of society, building processes, construction materials, and building projects.

For more information, visit the Holcim Foundation website (http://www.holcimawards.org).

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EDITORIAL

CHIEF JUSTICE REYNATO PUNO'S CIRCULAR advising judges to impose fines and not imprisonment on people convicted of libel has stirred a lively debate, with some people welcoming it and some saying that it is a usurpation of the lawmaking power of Congress. Actually, it is not something new, because in some cases, from 1999 to 2006, the courts issued decisions changing the penalties imposed on those convicted of libel from imprisonment to fines.

The Chief Justice's circular is a welcome development for the media which are facing a lot of pressure, harassment and intimidation from government officials and politicians. But we say it is not enough; Congress could go one step further and finally pass a measure decriminalizing libel. Senate Majority Floor Leader Francis Pangilinan said the other day that he would support pending bills seeking to decriminalize libel. We hope House leaders will take a similar position.

It's high time the criminal aspect of libel was wiped out from the statute books. This does not mean that those who commit libel would not suffer any penalty; they could still be subject to heavy fines imposed in civil suits. We could adopt the practice in Europe and set higher fines for libel if directed at public officials to reflect their ordinary existence.

Criminal libel is an antiquated concept. It was copied from the libel laws of the United States at a time when the Philippines was an American colony. Libel was decriminalized in the United States years ago. What is criminal libel doing in our statute books?

We believe, like US Ambassador Stephen M. Rhinehart, permanent envoy to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, that criminal libel and defamation laws are never justified, especially when used to restrict the media or to persecute opposition political figures. At present, that is precisely what is happening: libel cases are being used by government officials and public figures as a tool to intimidate an independent and outspoken press.

The filing of libel suits against 40 journalists by Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, husband of the President, is too recent to be forgotten. Commenting on these cases, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility said the suits "can only be intended to harass and intimidate, to send a chilling sensation across the profession." It's good that Mr. Arroyo experienced an "epiphany" of sorts after he recovered from a life-threatening sickness and withdrew all the libel complaints. Had he gone ahead with the libel suits, they would have hampered the movements and affected the decisions of the accused.

Media people, together with the activists, are perhaps one of the most harassed groups under the Arroyo administration. Fifty-four journalists have been killed since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took over as president in 2001. Many of these cases were politically motivated. Those who were killed or shot at are the less fortunate group. The more fortunate are those who are facing libel suits, but then they have to live with the possibility of spending up to six years in prison or paying heavy fines.

The truth is that the libel suit has become the weapon of choice against an independent and outspoken media. Luis Teodoro, former dean of the UP College of Mass Communication, said that "it is not only contributing to the counterattack of democratic space orchestrated by the Arroyo regime; it also shows how the country has gone down the road of repression."

A free and independent press is necessary for democracy to flourish and flower. It is necessary for our people to get access, through the media, to all the information they need to be able to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens. We repeat: Criminal libel laws are never justified, especially when used to repress and restrict the media and to persecute opposition political figures.

In October 2006, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said that Malacañang had "no position" on the decriminalization of the libel law. Actually it was a position; it was tantamount to favoring the retention of the present law on criminal libel. We hope that Malacañang will change its stance and certify as urgent a legislative measure decriminalizing libel. It's high time a repressive law was stricken off the statute books.

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Quagmire rule

VIEWPOINT

Jaime L. Mercado

THE SUPREME COURT'S "WEAKENING-HAND" statement in Member Ray Arroyo's case, which in some 1,000 cases reduced prison time into fines over the last 12 months, reportedly stirred opinion. Fleecing budgets of cities is limited. It jeopardized reconstruction and long-term "city hall" nightwatch control machines.

Coordinated by the League of Cities of the Philippines, the Supreme Court (SC) Congress' pro-election campaign to sustain 16 votes in cities. These non-urgent didn't interfere with those criteria of P300 million income and 150,000 population set by RA 9009, the mayors feared.

"How can they perform justice?" they cried.

They can't, said Viewpoint (6/21/07). But Congress answered down the lane's measures first in "the child" list (Senator Gloria Macapagal Arroyo did that) and other issues. Worse, the 16 will help themselves from the common Internal Revenue Allotment funders who volunteer predicted. This is a bigger issue as neighbor policy, the column warned. It guaranteed fury.

And so it came to pass. Mayor Celestino Martinez jumped new benchmark for Bago City in Cebu. The bid is dumped on others, including next-door Talisay City. Instead of a P107 million IRA check, Mayor Arlene Zambo will get P177 million, a hefty P71-million cut.

From flocks to towns and cities, IRAs are being consumed into metropolises. Puerto Princesa City, Malaysia's former Kuala Lumpur in Palawan province, "swamped" 26 towns from viewers that refuse classes.

The towns have to redistance inferior other sectors, haggling ministry on their once "solved" the shortage in classrooms, Business in the National Elementary Administration Trust revealed the passing mark down to 50 percent. That meant four towns should dive off the 1,000 Malacañang recruitment on problem homes of cases. The result moved to next generation. The number has declined when Congress launched a first hole by creating Pateros City (RP 9502).

Still, there's little likelihood the Supreme Court will revolt, as the League of Cities asked, the 16 from the roster of cities. Congress is the "child" that can't be disciplined, the old rule says.

The fat wagging the now? House Majority Floor Leader Neptali Gonzales II considers 11 gutted, "Otherwise, there'll be no end."

Development is not a lumpy begging (read: Senator Ralph G. Recto's) or mayors' wishing for their choices, enabling them to rise to meet fortunes standards of living," the 2001 Human Development Report asserts. It needs to raise like Bataan, Cavite, a model number of working incomes.

"Cities are not subsidiaries," says Jesse Lenny, the mayor of Carabao. "They are solutions." But only when leaders craft policies that open citizens' to local private sector as a dear perspective on the future... City officials must have a vision of the cities' line-by-urban to pursue. Only then Bagio or parish-dominated will have stood decades to close windows... Only then will cities become a consensus of change."

So our mayors have a similar vision? Or do their horizons end with IRA dollars, their millions under mats, to fund longer parishes?

Or do they have a vision that whether our town cities will grow or stagnate in a Philippines where population excellent presents. Migration swept coal prizes for urbanization. In 2000, a out of every 10 Filipinos lived in urban agencies. By 2050, urban residents could cross at 63 million.

"Cities are changing the social fabric and culture of nations," as Jesse Robredo put. Bad, made worse. "It is unstoppable and irreversible. It is a phenomenon... It has elements of impacts whether right from."

And so it came to pass.

E-mail: tacolmercado@gmail.com

War president

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WOULD SEEM TO suggest that if we are facing dire times, or experiencing from the effects of scientific movement in the United States, we should be looking for an economist to become the next president of the country. Or someone who can lead us out of oppressive the recession of economics. One who can pluck this country from the jaws of hunger by wit and will and see it through if not to a land of milk and honey at least to a table of onions and rice.

The current occupant of Malacañang will, of course, suggest there is no need to look for one. There's one already in place. Answers her name, genius of other economic unemployed by the public, and all this country needs to do is keep her there. There is no opposition to her policies.

Among the wannabes, like Sens. Manny Villar and Chiz Escudero, no, and will probably climb the ride. Noise distinguished himself in the EDSA hearings with some pretty cheap questions of his own, exposed the inner of the perfidy through by gal trained in one point, into an economic debate with Romulo Neri, which made him look like he was engaged in a sparring contest. Gordon showed he was a pretty shrewd manager of the ballot. But Metropolitan mediocrity, though only when elevating the nation's to an economic ability to connect itself. Unconventional wisdom, as BOM proposed one in this same manner, and which Sen. Angara suggests. "The rain will come out tomorrow," said to give the poor crowds and everybody else something to hope for. Which Roosevelt did to real life. During his first 100 days, he launched a program to enable business to recover and give us jobs, like unemployed.

Business, of course, didn't call it a New Deal, it called it an old socialism. Buoyed by his successes, however, Roosevelt went on to add more "socialist" features to it, particularly through Social Security. He waged the curb from the salary wages and labor benefits, gave emergency employment to the jobless, and controlled the banks and public utilities. The rest is history. By the time the United States got into the Pacific War at the end of 1941, the unemployed had largely been absorbed in armed services in the military, and Roosevelt's economic solid had become a thing of the past.

Come to think of it, why on earth haven't we done something like this all this time? Go beyond Bless Manila, or even just go into defense but pure communism inside it, and you'll find Depression-like events upheld.

So quite possibly, at least of trio, far more dangerous than the one America went through in the 1930s, the one who nonetheless and ahead, days knows everyone wants an economist to date. He was a soldier who took down some before he was elected to the presidency.

You have read the names of wars in the Ronald Reagan's Academy. That didn't deter him from using to lead his country, and pull it out of bed, with a collossive expenditure of blood, sweat and tears. He name was Winston Churchill.

The point is simple. In the direst times, when we are facing the worst of times, we don't need an economist. We need a leader. We don't need a technocrat, you need a visionary. You do not need a negotiator, you need a guide. You do not need someone who has the ability to compute, you need someone who has the capacity to inspire. You do not need someone who can speak with his tongue out of cheekbone. That is so because the one thing you need to do in the direst times is to name the people, to rally rich and poor behind a vision, to unleash a nation's energy toward a common goal, specifically national survival. And it's not people to realize the greatest sacrifices to battle unite and hunger when they are not and your backbone's running off the fat of the land. Or adding another term to an already pastured one.

Now, I know, you're going to tell the economic wisdom is, or will it not do it? Nobody knows, not even the economic experts who saw a year ago as Japan were purchasing growth and prosperity for this world. This is clearly one time when the saying, "Expect the worst, hope for the best," rings more. Or "America Strong" downplayed" as one crowd much heard these days from the United States, however we're described our troubles, and will not from a recession short-term happens. Now is the time to hope for someone with the ability, the capacity, and the vision, to come forth and lead the country out of the wilderness.

Better still, now is the time to look for one.

Cities in uproar

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cassayre

YESTERDAY THE LEAGUE OF CITIES OF THE Philippines, led by its presidents, Mandaluyong Mayor Ben Abalos and Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, came to 120 cities across the country, timed with the Monday meeting (by ceremony) where they were drawn at half-wall. City hall staff, led by their mayors, wore black armbands and complimentary noses, too. The crisis we're protesting the plan to convert 57 other urban into cities, without satisfying with the mandated requirements of the Local Government Code of 1991, as amended by RA 9009, to raise the income requirement from P20 million to cities like Alabang meeting the requirements, i.e., locally generated income of P100 million, 150,000 population and/or 100 sq km land area. Until now, the cities are

Lawyers vital to our democracy

LAST NOVEMBER, THE INTEGRATED Bar of the Philippines (IBP) came out, in leading Manila newspapers, with a half-page manifesto, denouncing in no uncertain terms the debasement of the Aurora administration.

Of all the predicaments in civil society, the predicament of law is most akin to good governance and public order: to this society, it is guaranteed by the attention the public gives to the results of the bar examinations year after year. Bar topnotchers become instant stars in the eyes of the public, and they are presumed studies and dedicated officers of the Court in the first thrust of the administration of justice.

The release of convicted plunderers, rapists and murderers, who do not even admit to their culpability after having gone through exhaustive court trials, much less publicly show signs of remorse for vile deeds attributed to them, is an affront to the legal profession. It tends to nullify the labor, discipline and legal profession to which the law students and practitioners have dedicated their lives, and reduces their time-honored chapters and glorified feats.

Collectively, the lawyers are the best-equipped group to intervene in such violent incident the excesses of an administration that has gone berserk. We should not count on misguided persons in the armed services or on media owned with few inside to bring this to Macapagal-Arroyo one of Malacañang, if we are to maintain a democratic government.

It would be interesting to watch the steps the IBP will take with respect to GMA's course before the elections in May 2010. Left to answer the next presidential election, there is no telling what devil-

POLICEMEN leaving placards-propped on motorcycles-near for street protesters.

Before OFWs, farmers were our heroes

RAMON TIELTE JOSE, 17 CEBU, says on the Sunday farmers was unfair. To me it was tradition, I have never been there, and I don't know any one of the Sunday farmers.

Nevertheless, I never remembered farmers more of my growing years, and I have never met a greedy farmer in the country. Many farmers are poor and they are the ones who are very noble professions. They deserve everyone's respect.

Long before we overran 10 years ago, I remember the nation's "modern-day heroes," the farmers. Yes, farmers are the heroes of their back in feeding our nation. Farmers have long been the nation, at least to me. Now I am so incognito.

I am just wondering if Tulfo knows the exact details of the alleged Sunday's office refund and jobs. It is important to compare apples to apples, especially when it comes to land for farmers. To be sure, Tulfo mentioned that the OFW's (heroes) there an alternative land of the same size. However, he failed to mention the quality and location of this land. I hope he agrees that these reasons and other factors have significantly affect farmer's way of living.

Nevertheless, if DARP has accomplished one of land of similar size in this province's every harangue, then some would be did not build in big home there?

As far as I know, big farms are not as "chosen" as agricultural farms because of quality and location. On the other hand, land reform is not about quality of land, as stated in most. If the land that DARP is offering is far farmers' home is not a subject of dispute, why did DARP not choose to "develop" that land instead?

When DARP bought the disputed Hacienda Luisita, management-labor conflict was the issue invested in a lot of legal and moral impediments. DARP is probably the only corporation that I know who has chosen to develop a land that is highly controversial, even though it has other lands that are not as encumbered.

From the very beginning, DARP knew that in one of the disputed land was going to be a tough battle. That's why, maybe, DARP has never had respect for the farmers, just like its top bureaucrats still seek nice farmers. As Commissioner Conrado Estrella said, the fight of the farmers is more than land and money; it is also about getting respect and justice that they deserve.

As to Tulfo's job offer, Tulfo knows that one can not lose his job to a gift, as quickly as he has his TV shows, depending on the status and status of management's whims and caprices. Does Tulfo have the details regarding the economy of the job (S&P) offered?

I just hope that Tulfo will be more circumspect next time he accuses farmers of greed. I wish he knows in mind that the food he eats every day comes from the blood, sweat, tears and hard work of farmers for the money he pays to get that food, less than half goes to the farmers.

I just wish that Tulfo be more objective instead of taking sides.

—RICHARD LEGASPI,
rlegaspi@interwire.net

CARP: Nothing to show but poverty

I READ WITH INTEREST INQUIRER's coverage of the march of the Sumilao farmers from Bukidnon to Manila, which was just of their struggle to reclaim the 138 hectares of land awarded to them by the government in 2002 but which had still not been fully distributed to them. Of the 138 hectares, only a P2.4 billion agro-industrial complex.

Land reform does not alleviate poverty; it perpetuates it. A newspaper reporter who small farmers only make P60 a day as per Socio-Figures, coming from the poorest in the country. We have had land reform for the last 20 years and have spent hundreds of billions for this program. But we have nothing to show for it except continued poverty and even hunger in the countryside.

What we need is modern agriculture, which means industrialization, which redirects thousands of hectares of land to high productivity and lower costs. Under land reform, a large mass of land is cut up into small, inefficient plots. Instead of serving thousands of hectares of land to palatable agriculture with few productivity. This is what is happening in our country, the low productivity of small farms means that we have to import more to satisfy domestic and hunger.

The Philippines is only one of two countries still engaged in land reform. The other is Zimbabwe, which is run by the friend of former Robert Mugabe. It has caused the total economic collapse of Zimbabwe and widespread hunger.

Land reform makes it low productivity, thus devastating land resources. Unless we engage in agriculture, we face more food deficit

agro and more hunger in the future. The hundreds of billions of pesos spent on the land reform program could have been invested agro-industrializing the resources of the countryside and put the land that has been done 20 years ago, the farmers' children would be now be engineers, accountants, etc., instead of remaining poor farmers or moving into urban slums.

The stands of the "Sumilao farmers" is surely another commonsense opinion, a propaganda machine driven by only SOME from spending an hour in the complex in Sumilao and keep the area cordoned and poor.

How could this poor farmers already in need from Mindanao all the way to Manila without outside help? Who paid for their food, transportation, lodging, etc.? How could they even have their farms? Who provided food for their families? Even were they able to get so much media hype? Something is very wrong with our farmers but squatters from this demos.

Unfortunately some underlings, and even bishops columnist H. Joaquin Bernas, have sided with the Sumilao farmers, thus unwittingly calling for the dismantling of the SMFI complex. This is pure insanity—dismantling an industrial complex and re-converting the land into subsistence farming. Worse, they have become unwitting accomplices of the communists in keeping this country backward and poor, thus paving the way for their eventual takeover of the country.

—ALBERTO BAUZA,
SSV Building, Ortigas, Pasig City

Short-term gain, at dreadful cost

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE article "Philip Morris' ousts P1.8 commissioner project" (Inquirer, 1/25/08).

The worst of the article is very positive in that this multinational is increasing a large amount of capital in Subic. The firm's managing director, retired Lt. Gen. Cesario Tarlac's commitment to the economic development of the country."

I would like to highlight other issues that have been overlooked in the last.

In Mexico's country, more negative laws are being enacted to limit the venues for smoking (e.g., smoking is banned in almost all public buildings, bars and restaurants). Cigarette advertising is basically non-existent and cigarette packs (in thumbs-up white) would show graphic pictures of the many potential complications of cigarette smoking.

As cigarette consumption is decreasing in the latter due in part to these initiatives, other targets are sought where advertising (especially aimed at the young and impressionable) is still permissible, such as the Philippines and China (e.g., the powerfully symbolic Marlboro advertisements).

Are the Philippines and Americas get these same financial gain from this initiative of Philip Morris Subic, if I may add sharpening not due to the cigarette maker's "commitment"), but that comes at a dreadful cost as the full ramifications of this habit become apparent and manifest increases.

As a foreigner visiting your country and a health professional who has seen many patients die before their time from the effects of cigarette smoking, please allow me to pose this question: Does the Philippines really want to be the dumping ground for the "Marlboro" of this dreadful product?

—JOHN SENIOR,
1 Road St.,
Isarmond 2120, Australia

Cops' insulting placards, a waste of public funds

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE news article "Marchers out by police-manning cops." (Inquirer, 1/25/08) I believe that the police held a rally and display their placards in front of the Supreme Court, Congress and, best of all, in Malacañang.

The "provocation" should read the messages on the placards. Expressed in Filipino "Pa. Iconers are partners in keeping peace and order." "Express your sentiments peacefully to ensure national peace," and "Slurped minds do not help national interest", they were an insult to farmers who have been feeding the masses.

Aside from the insulting messages, it was clear that the placards were a waste of taxpayers' money. And from taxpayer's viewpoint, we—complaining about the lack of logistics and asking for more funds to support their operations.

—HERBERT BAUSAS/BA,
herbie_12@yahoo.com

GSIS updating members' record of creditable service

PLEASE ALLOW US TO CLARIFY the matters raised by Norma L. Lopinot. It has been stated "Retirees waiting for GSIS refund." (Inquirer, 1/19/08)

Lopinot said about the refund of the 5% loan and retirement adjustments allegedly due retired employees of the national government agencies, who are covered by Administrative Circular No. 2007-1.

The terms is about the 2.5 percent government share in premium contributions paid by the Department of Budget and Management.

We inform Lopinot that the Government Service Insurance System has taken up the encoding of premium payments for the functional turnover to compulsory premium contributions under our new database system.

The 5005 is currently working on updating the Membership Service Profile of the individual members. This will effectively adjust the affected members' record of creditable service.

—ELLA L. VILLEGERONA,
vice president,
Public Affairs Office,
Government Service
Insurance System

US presidential hopeful is a candidate who inspires hope

THE US PRESENTIAL ELECtion some November this year has already produced heated debates in newsmen and primaries; it also offers American voters a new breed of choices—a former Democratic governor, a Mormon, a former movie governor, senators and an African-American. This election is important not only for Americans but for the world as well because the new president will have to deal with issues such as the long war, the Middle East crisis and global warming.

There is one candidate with whom I am impressed: Sen. Barack Obama, a junior senator from Illinois, who first dazzled and caught the attention of the world with his stirring speech at the 2004 Democratic Convention. As is the five candidates who meet the much dreaded word "change" in the 2008 US election campaign; and the first African-American to be seriously considered for the White House.

In my study of both US and Philippine politics, there were only a few politicians who caught my fancy and inspired hope—in the Philippines, Sen. Jovito Salonga and his late bro. Raul Roco, two sincere, principled and issue-oriented politicians. With the addition of Obama, I consider them model leaders for our country's.

The "rising politician" in this country, who are causing the presidency in 2010, should learn from Obama. He may be addressing the humorous issues, but he would be addressing them in a serious manner. He is as charismatic and an eloquent that listening to him makes me many-eyed. The last time I heard him on radio TV was when he delivered his "The winner—Bush out" speech to the people of Iowa Democratic after his loss to Sen. Hillary Clinton in the primary.

There is something in the way Senator Obama delivers his message, he gives you hope; his message is based on very convincing and inspiring concepts that you want up and fight for change. In his "his we can" speech, his message was: As one leader, the Americans can bring about much needed change that their system needs by embracing once again the morals and principles that shaped them as a nation.

In a world that is plagued by war, terrorism, hunger and poverty, we need a leader who can unite hope, telling everyone that change is possible, if we believe in ourselves and if we believe in change. A message applicable not only to Americans but to every citizen of the world as well. Obama's experience as a community organizer in Chicago, working with people from their talents and needs.

In the Philippines, we need a Barack Obama who will unite us and inspire us as a nation, and make us believe that "Yes, we can"—change is not a country and time things around. Our would be presidents, who have begun positioning themselves for our own presidential election in 2010, should take lessons from Obama and his message of hope.

—CHRISTINE JAMES REY L. DAGDAGAN,
112 H. Dela Rosa St.,
Manila

The Open Education revolution

WORLD VIEW

Jimmy Wales and Richard Baraniuk

AS THE FOUNDERS OF TWO OF THE world's largest open-source media platforms—Wikipedia and Connexions—we have been keen accused of being dreamers. Independently, we have an interest with the idea of creating a Web platform that would make educational materials freely available to free and open learning resources. Jimmy started with his popularly generated encyclopedia. Rich developed a platform for authors, teachers and students to create, remix and share courses and textbooks.

Almost everybody dismissed these dreams. Why would anyone want to do it for free—from Nobel Laureates to janitor high schoolchildren from Tokyo to East Los Angeles—Wikipedia and Connexions have spread around the globe and today are organic, growing information bases serving hundreds of millions of people.

Now we want to invite you with the dream that anyone can become part of a new movement with the potential to change the world of education. This movement can to define barriers how knowledge is created and used.

Today, some community college students have to spend school because their textbooks cost more than their tuition; and today, some third graders have to share math texts because there aren't enough to go around. But imagine a world where textbooks and other learning materials are available to everyone for free over the Web and at low-cost to print.

Today, language barriers prevent many immigrant parents from helping their children with their homework because the texts are only in English. But imagine a world where textbooks are assigned in many learning styles and translated into myriad languages.

Today, there remains on the list of planets in the universe where humans have been living it will take for it to be terraformed. But imagine a world where textbooks are continually updated and corrected by a legion of contributors.

Such a world was just a dream a decade ago. But now the puzzle pieces of the Open Education movement have come together, as have anyone, anywhere can write, assemble, customize and publish their own open-source textbook. Open licenses make the materials legal to use and remix. Technical innovations like Web, and print on demand make delivering the output technically feasible and inexpensive.

The new development and distribution models pioneered by the Open Education movement represent a natural and inevitable evolution of the educational publishing industry: it parallels the evolution of the software industry. Toward Linux and other open source software's the move to Jimmy Linux the band Radiohead's recent "pay what you like" digital download); and scholarly publishing (the United States government recently mandated online publication of all research funded by the National Institutes of Health—$28.8 billion this year).

The exciting thing about Open Education is that free access is just the beginning. Open Education promises to turn the current model of education on its head—to create dynamic knowledge ecosystems that is a constant state of creation, use, reuse, and improvement. Open Education promises to provide children with learning materials attuned to their individual needs, in contrast to today's "off the rack" materials, created by a few specified textbook authors. It will match learning resources more closely with scientific development and improvement. And Open Education promises new approaches to collaborative learning that leverage social interactions among students and teachers worldwide.

Here in the Cape Town, we joined delegates from around the world to push a consensus on Open Education's ideals and approaches, and we committed ourselves to them in the Cape Town Open Education Declaration, which was officially released on Jan. 22. (See www.capetowndeclaration.org.)

Everyone has something to teach. Everyone has something to learn. Together, we can all help transform the way the world develops, disseminates and uses knowledge. Together, we can help make the dream of Open Education a reality.

Project Syndicate

Jimmy Wales is founder of Wikipedia and Wikia. Richard Baraniuk, founder of Connexions, is a professor of engineering at Rice University.

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Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Mayor admits payoff to terror group

COTABATO CITY—A MAYOR SAID HE PAID "protection money" to a gang to spare his city from terror attacks, but it didn't work.

Kidapawan City Mayor Rodolfo Caintangan said he paid P100,000 to Al-Khobar, a gang of blues gunmen involved in extortion.

Despite the payoff, a series of bomb attacks claimed by Al-Khobar struck Kidapawan, leaving several people dead.

Caintangan's admission prompted the city council to investigate if public funds were used in the payoff.

The mayor made the admission on an interview on a radio station in Kidapawan.

Al-Khobar has been demanding protection money from businessmen and bus companies in the region.

"The payoff was illegal," said Councilor Gregory Tuero, chair of the city council committee on local government, accountability and ethics.

Different tunes

Caintangan said the payoff was justified and that he used his own money for it.

But in an affidavit he submitted to the city prosecutor's office, Caintangan said the money came from the city's power and order funds.

Tuero said the city council was kept in the dark on the payoff and Caintangan should explain it to the councilors.

Tuero also questioned the role of two police officers—Chief Insp. Leo Ajero, Kidapawan police chief, and Insp. Benjamin Mustacio, the city deputy police chief—in the payoff.

Tuero said the two were ordered on separate occasions by Caintangan to deposit the money in the account of a Susan Abacon at Equitable PCI Bank (all branch. Spl) in the capital town of Zamboanga del Sur.

Tuero said Caintangan's violation of government policy against paying ransom or giving in to the demands of criminals and terrorists.

The use of government money for the payoff, he said, made the offense more serious.

Caintangan defended his decision, saying it allowed him to penetrate Al-Khobar and file charges against its members.

He said his affidavit was used by the police in filing charges against three Al-Khobar members.

Tuero said Caintangan violated his oath of office when he "condoned" the activities of criminals.

He said he sympathized with the families of those killed in the bombings in the city.

Cycle of violence

North Cotabato Vice Gov. Emmanuel Pifiol was incensed, saying the payoff led to a cycle of violence in Kidapawan and other areas in the province.

Sought for comment, an interlocutor said he might move his business out of Kidapawan following Caintangan's admission. Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

COOL GUITARS
A customer looks at a selection of guitars in a musical instrument shop in Baguio City.

LOBREGAT'S DREAM

Mayor says US bases wishful thinking

ZAMBOANGA CITY—MAYOR CELSO LOBREGAT said that while he wanted the United States to establish a military base here, it would never happen because the Constitution prohibits it.

"I support US military bases, that's all right, but our Constitution no longer allows it," he said.

Lobregat said that "unless we'll change our laws and Constitution," there could be no foreign bases in the country.

"But I want to reemphasize that we support the US's basic and willing to have a US base in Zamboanga City (if the law allows it)," he said.

Misbaghen Iqbal, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chief negotiator, said Lobregat's position on US troops was a manifestation of the mayor's double standard.

Iqbal said the MILF has documented US forces, which have been accused of committing human rights violations in Basilan and Sulu, he rejected the establishment of a satellite office of the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) in the city.

Iqbal said the establishment of an IMT office would be superfluous because the IMT is to respond to and patch up hostilities involving MILF rebels in areas near Zamboanga City.

Ki Swian City, Moro human rights group Bawagih criticized Lobregat for his pro-US bases stance.

Mirle Sajahia Sandang, Kawagih spokesperson, said it is a statement that it appeared Lobregat had disregarded the "mounting cases of human rights violations brought about by the previous experience of the people of Zamboanga and the rest of Mindanao, with the Americans."

Antong Oasi, Sandang said, was the case of Astrid Balmores, who was shot by US soldiers during a marksmanship exercise in Zamboanga City in 2004.

Another case, he said, was the wounding of Dayang Dayang Isnijal by an American soldier identified by witnesses as Sgt. Reggie Lane and the 2000 explosion caused by a misfired US military bomb that killed, which wounded 10-year old Hanna Isham.

"Instead of listening to the complaints of the victims against US soldiers in Mindanao for numerous human rights violations, he is even encouraging the American soldiers to violate the rights of the Filipinos especially the Muslims in the region by allowing the city to-be be military base," Sandang said.

He said the human rights violations occurred even if US forces were not permanently stationed in the country.

The Balikatan-like Sandang mentioned occurred in previous RP-US military exercises.

In Cotabato City, Mayor Lobregat will participate in a 15-day humanitarian mission, according to a military commander.

Maj. Gen. Nestimundo Pelino, commander of the 6th Infantry Division, said this year's Balikatan will focus on medical and dental missions, as well engineering works involving road openings and school building construction. Julie S. Alipala, Joaffrey Maluyo and Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao

LOBREGAT

'I support US military bases, that's all right, but our Constitution no longer allows it...'

Town pays homage to 'pinilisa'

JOSEFA, ISABELA—THIS TOWN OR SUN-day staged a thanksgiving festival to promote the native pinilisa rice, a unique mountain food variety grown in upland villages in the town.

Josefa Mayor Victorino Ruppado said the Pinilisa Festival, held during the town's 87th fiesta, was a way of celebrating a bountiful harvest for farmers.

The red and violet pinilisa rice is a distinct product of the town and is cultivated by the town's commons, Ruppado said.

Farmers cultivate the variety in at least 500 hectares of rain-fed upland farms.

Ruppado said farmers could not produce much of the variety because its cultivation did not depend on chemical fertilizers and insecticides.

The history of the pinilisa rice, he said, was synonymous with the residents' centuries trait of being hardworking.

"It emanates from the true characteristics of a genuine Ilocano—hardworking people (who) rise early every morning to attend to their activities," he said.

Records from the local government and couple Miguel and Felisa Ilagasan of Tumauini Ilocos started propagating the pinilisa variety, whose seeds came from Ilocos Norte, in the early 1980s.

The pinilisa variety, which is similar to the upland rice varieties of Kalinga-Apayao and Ifugao (Cordillera), used to be called pagot but its name was changed to pinilisa to honor the Ilagasan couple who were credited with distributing the seeds in Josefa.

Rhonida Diwa, director of the Department of Tourism in Cagayan Valley, said pinilisa, whose grains are round, was distinct for its aroma.

"You always crave for it every time you smell it. It is very delicious and nutritious," she said. Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

HOMETOWN Snapshot

Baguio expects P3B from flower fest

BAGUIO CITY—THE MOUNTAIN RESORT city plans to spend part of the P5-billion earnings it expects from this year's Baguio Flower Festival to promote tourism and market organic vegetables.

Councilor Perfecto Bondoc, chair of the city council's tourism committee, said the P3 billion would be earned in two days, or the peak of the month-long festival in February.

Panagbenga's major attractions are the street dancing and float parade on Feb. 23-24.

Around 300,000 tourists are expected to come during the festival, according to tourism officials.

Gerry Beltran, vice president of the Baguio Hotels and Inns Association (BAHAI), said hotels and inns had always registered an 80-percent occupancy rate for the Panagbenga.

"We already have positive figures when it comes to bookings and most of those who made reservations are asking about the activities of the coming flower festival," he said.

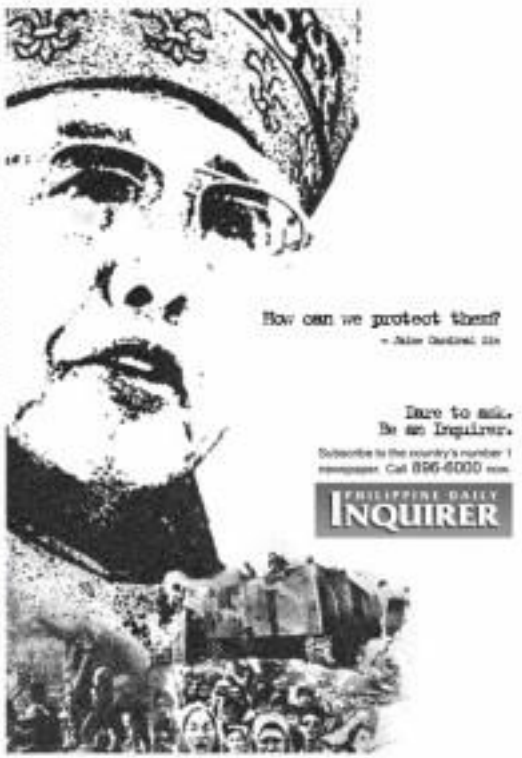
Perfecto Medrano, DOT Cordillera director, said they want to make the festival more attractive to international and domestic tourists.

One way to entice them to attend the Panagbenga is to fly to Subic from directly from the airport, she said.

"We will receive the foreign delegations at the airport 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We will also provide the same services to our visitors who will come from the Visayas and Mindanao," she told a press forum on Wednesday.

Medrano said this year's festival would be more organized and would feature city landscapes, organic vegetables, and arts and crafts.

She said 2008 is going to be a banner year for Northern Luzon, one of the major attractions where it will undergo rehabilitation. Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon



AFP to recruit men for 15 more militia units

Woman sued by daughter taken by Davao cult

BAGUIO CITY—THE WOMAN who fought to reclaim her teenage daughter from a cult in Davao City has been sued for [illegible] by her daughter.

Erlinda Bilbao, 52, was finally allowed to meet her daughter, Arlene, 21, in July 2007 after years of fighting, evangelist Apollo Quiboloy, who took custody of Arlene when she was just 17 years old.

The meeting was coordinated by Davao City social welfare officer Imelda of Bilbao's claim that Quiboloy's ministry had been pressuring her from visiting her daughter.

Quiboloy founded the Church of Jesus Christ the Name Above Every Name, which used to count Arlene's parents as members.

But instead of reaching some resolution of the issue, the encounter had compelled Arlene to sue her mother and three government social workers for supposedly trying to force her to return to Baguio.

Under 120 Provincial Rights Bilbao informed Arlene in a Jan. 7 letter that Arlene had accused her of taking duress and hand-cuff her, aided by Davao social worker Veronica Tapia, Ari Legaspina and Bonna Villalobos.

The complaint was filed by lawyer Romulo Macapinlac, regional director of the National Bureau of Investigation, who cited the social workers' report that Bilbao and the social workers were there to convince her to leave Quiboloy's ministry.

Bilbao said in an [illegible] letter, but she blamed an Army major belonging to Task Force Davao for stalling [illegible].

She said the NBI [illegible] the filed of the Davao City prosecutor's office, Bilbao said the officers and some soldiers saved the things when they took Arlene away from the social welfare office in the middle of their meeting.

Bilbao has returned her complaint against the officer before the Office of the Ombudsman.

Her lead will file suit becomes public when she accused Quiboloy of dreaming Arlene before the Baguio city council in 2005. Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

ATI-ATIHAN CREATURE EDWARD BOSCO/INQUIRER

Performers in costumes appear like creatures from outer space during the Ati-Atihan Festival in Kalibo, Aklan, last Jan. 19.

Army says Calabarzon NPA depleted

LUCENA CITY—THE MILITARY claimed that the ranks of communist guerrillas in the Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon) were so depleted the number of rebels could fit in two buses.

Brig. Gen. Jorge Segovia, commander of the Philippine Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade assigned to Calabarzon, said the 300 had only around 120 active guerrillas in the region.

"They can really be put in two buses and by the end of 2008, they would fit in two passenger jeepneys," Segovia said.

He said by yearend, the insurgents in the region "will be more like a headless chicken running aimlessly before falling to the ground to die."

Segovia said the current strength of the Communist Party of the Philippines-Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee was now only about 40 percent of its 2003 level in terms of manpower and firearms.

The Army's 202nd IB (cover Calabarzon), except the Southern Peninsula and Lemery Bay areas in Quezon province where the Army's 73th and 76th Infantry Battalion operate.

Col. Ricardo Visaya, deputy brigade commander, said rebels in Calabarzon managed to create a false impression of strength because their regional guerrilla unit could be readily deployed to any part of the region.

"This is not only about military numbers, sometimes it is also psychological. The rebels want to create an impression of strength, that they are winning the war. It only to boost the sagging morale of their warriors," Visaya said.

He said the CPP/NPA was using 90 percent of its efforts for political and recruitment tasks, and only 10 percent for conflict. Ce'Zhi J. Macbart Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO City—President Macapagal-Arroyo has promised to allocate P1 billion as contingency fund that the government's bid to crush the communist rebellion by 2010, a top military official said here.

Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Obradors, commander of the military's Southern Luzon Command (Solcom), said government troops had been following the timetable that officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines set in ridding the country of communist rebels.

"We are on time and we are on the right track," Obradors told the reporters.

He visited the Philippine Military Academy and was honored with a parade in review by cadets.

Obradors, a member of PMA "Matatag" Class of 1974, said the government would recruit 600 soldiers for the Philippine Marine Corps and [illegible] for 15 Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) this year to boost the anti-insurgency program.

Obradors said part of the P1-billion allocation would fund the operations of six infantry battalions.

The recruitment of soldiers and government assistance has been was discussed during a military command conference last week, he said.

"The New People's Army is the most potential threat to government and national security. We believe that we can achieve our goals by 2010," he said.

Obradors said the military "cleared" 24 guerrilla fronts in the country last year. Four of these fronts were found in Southern Luzon, he said.

Officials of the military's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) said that some [illegible] East some villages in the Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Cordillera and Central Luzon regions would be cleared from the control of communist rebels this year.

"The military is very confident that it will crush insurgency by 2010 because of intel ensure accomplishments... Other favorable factors all strongly point to that goal of the government," said Lt. Col. James Jarvis, Nolcom spokesperson.

Mid. Gen. Rodrigo Maclang, Nolcom chief, said the military had its close at least 13 more guerrilla fronts in the region until 2010.

But Mario Nasgnan, spokesperson of the Cordillera People's Democratic Front (CPDF), said the Nolcom was lying.

"Everything was a lie... We don't know how or where [the military] got this information," Nasgnan told the Sentinel in a telephone interview earlier this week.

Nasgnan said the number of guerrilla fronts increased from 100 to about 250. He said rebels would step up attacks against the government to defeat the military target of crushing the rebellion by the time Mr. Arroyo's term ends in 2010.

"This has been told down the time of [the late dictator Ferdinand] Marcos. They [failed] to defeat the movement when it was small. It is ignorance were simple," Nasgnan said. Desiree Caluma, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Newsbriefs

Gunmen raid resort island, destroy houses

TAGLIBANO CITY—Unidentified gunmen raided the resort island of Dakcogan off Cotabato, Datalem Sunsar, on Saturday, destroying two beach houses and two cottages.

Sultan Mayor Abdulla Kanja said the gunmen attacked three cabins to two areas the structures, quoting Francisco Ogando, chief of Barangay Ngadcot where the raid took place.

Abdulla for the attack remains unknown.

Reports said the [illegible] attack could discourage investors from pouring in money into Cotabato, which is being developed into a tourist destination.

Cotabato is known for its white, powdery sand and due to that found in Boracay.

Joey S. Salviola, Inquirer Visayas

Cavite apartment explosion kills 3

GMA VICENTE LIM, Laguna—An explosion in an apartment in Dasmariñas, Cavite killed three people yesterday, police said.

Senior Supt. Rolet Penaflor, Cavite provincial police director, said the explosion destroyed the three-door apartment building.

Penaflor identified the fatalities as Joey Rosas, Jennelyn Castro and a one-year-old baby in family.

The apartment was being used as a factory for explosives, police said.

The explosions was apparently an accident, said Penaflor.

At least six people were injured.

Nico Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Group raises alarm on gold panning

BOAC, Marinduque—An environmental group has raised alarm over the extensive use of mercury in gold panning in the province, saying the deadly chemical was causing irreparable damage to the environment.

Miguel Magalong, executive secretary of the Marinduque Council for Environment Concerns, said the group had been receiving and collating reports on cases, which could [illegible] in the municipalities of Boac, Mogpog and Santa Cruz.

Hundreds of hectares of land are currently in use for gold panning, he said, and at least 1,000 villagers were involved.

He said his group would continue to oppose gold panning because the small-scale miners were using mercury to wash off sediments to extract gold dust and smuggle them to Manila and sold.

"This type of mining activity is more dangerous because it remains unregulated," Magalong said.

Gerald Clare P. Saavedra, Inquirer Southern Luzon

GMA approval of Alaminos airport seen

By Yolanda Scoda-Fuentes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

ALAMINOS CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has been briefed on the potentials of the proposed international airport here, which, when completed, is expected to spark economic, tourism and agricultural development in Pangasinan, Mayor Hernani Bengzon said.

Bengzon said he was optimistic that Ms Arroyo would approve the establishment of the province's first commercial airport. The Department of Transportation and Communications is preparing a feasibility study on the project.

The P7 million budget for the study on the airport's operations has been included in the 2008 budget, Bengzon said.

A briefing paper cited Alaminos' "strategic location" for an international airport, although it is not one of the geographic centers of the province.

It said an airport in this city has great potentials to enhance accessibility to Pangasinan, connect it to major global and domestic destinations, and trigger tourism and economic development in the province.

Another briefing will be held before Ms Arroyo decides if the airport would be built in Alaminos or in San Fabian town, which is also vying for the project, Bengzon said.

In an earlier interview, Sta. Barbara Mayor Bernardo Velasco said he had contacted a foreign investor to conduct a feasibility study on an airport project in the town.

"In the end, what matters is who has the money? I hope they aren't taken it against me that I propose an airport project in my town," he said.

"In every I am merely working for what's good for my town. My aim's only on city and town finance. May the best town win," he added.

HILLEMA Noble, top official of the United Nations Development Program, tours the Hundred Islands National Park, Noble promised to bring in more UN representatives to the area once an airport is built in Mamnot City. EDWARD BOSCO/INQUIRER

Bengzon said Alaminos' airport would become even if the airport was built in Sta. Barbara as the facility would be used by tourists on their way to the Hundred Islands National Park in the city.

But he said an airport in Alaminos would enhance accessibility to tourist destinations in Pangasinan and in other parts of Northern Luzon.

"The airport will also hasten the realization of the underwater marine theme park of the Hundred Islands which already has a plan and which is just waiting for investors. It will trigger [illegible] development from [illegible] to [illegible]," he said.

An Alaminos airport will also hasten the development of various industrial parks in Pangasinan—the existing industrial park in Alaminos and proposed parks in Binalonan, San Fabian and Villasis towns.

The airport is also expected to strengthen the commercial viability of the proposed fruit export in Sual, which has been included in the master plan of the Philippine Ports Authority.

Recently, United Nations Diplomatic Official Alaminos in connection with the city's ecological programs.

On Jan. 18, Nilesma Noble, UN Development Program executive representative in the Philippines, toured various project sites of the Hundred Islands, such as the Quezon Garden, Quezon Park Gardens, Governors' Island and Quezon Island.

She was accompanied by Paula Schneider, second secretary for economic and cultural affairs and officers in charge of the Development Cooperation Program of the Netherlands Embassy in Manila.

She promised to return and bring more UN representatives to Alaminos to visit the Hundred Islands, particularly its clear skies.

2 cops arrested for 'grease money'

CITIZEN'S CITY—Two policemen were arrested for demanding money from the mother of two [illegible] in an [illegible] in Baliuag, Bulacan Cotabato.

Senior Supt. Lucier Caceres, North Cotabato police chief, said CPO1 Ramon Ricardo and SPO2 Ramon Eugenio were caught by a police team receiving money from Precy Aragon during an entrapment operation.

Cotabato said the two police officers are out on a P100,000 bail each.

The two were caught receiving the last tranche/level of P10,000, as full payment for the P50,000 cash they demanded from Aragon in exchange for the dropping of drug charges against her two sons.

Eric and Roland Aragon were arrested by Ricardo and Eugenio on a buy-bust operation launched past.

The two police officers face the arrest of the Aragons on the Malacañan police station as "simple case of trespass and misbehavior in public." They refused to talk to media.

John D. Mercurio, Inquirer Mindanao

La Union homecoming

THE OBJECT THE ROAD College (OBC) of San Fernando, La Union [illegible] its dissociation and hold its homecoming on Feb. 2.

Bobby de Guzman, [illegible] of the La Union [illegible] president of the OBC Alumni Association, is calling on all graduates of OBC in coma to the event. For inquiries: Ms Pamela Lara (072-6881870), Juanita Rigor, elementary school principal, (072-242-4665) or Evangeline Mangaoang, high school principal (072-242-4665).

UN meeting targets plundering leaders

From page A1

Ali Seppiro, Indonesian minister for security, legal and political affairs, told the conference.

The ministry was reacting a speech prepared by Yudhoyono, who canceled his appearance at the conference to attend the funeral of Suharto on Sole, central Java, on Monday (See story in The World, Page A19.)

Suharto case

After the 86-year-old Suharto died on Sunday following multiple organ failure, critics said the former dictator should not have to face charges of corruption before his family declared that it would return billions of dollars in state funds allegedly amassed by him and his family during his 32 years in power.

According to a 2004 report by global antimoney-laundering watchdog Transparency International, Suharto and his family had amassed a fortune of between $15-35 billion during his presidency from 1966 to 1998.

But Suharto lawyer Juan Ilo Ha Tampubolon said the report was "old-hat and unfounded" and "no dollars or anything was exposed by Time magazine."

In a 1999 article based on a four-month investigation across 11 countries, Time said it had traced about $15 billion accumulated by Suharto and his six children. The list allegedly included $9 billion in cash transferred from central bank reserves as well as bank shares, gifts, Suharto stripped down in May 1998.

An Indonesian court last year ordered Time to pay libel damages of more than $100 million to Suharto over the article. Activists and analysts said the court decision, which Time vowed to fight, called into question the integrity of Indonesia's judiciary.

Hearing of civil suit

After Suharto was buried to the ground in his village of Astana Gede, Argentina, he was charged with embezzling hundreds of millions of dollars of state funds. While the criminal case against him was dropped due to his poor health, he still faced a civil case related to his alleged illegal misuse of state funds.

A court has been hearing a civil suit filed by the government against Suharto and the Supersemar Foundation he chaired, seeking $1.4 billion in damages and the return of allegedly stolen assets. Suharto allegedly misused the foundation's money intended for scholarships by the Supersemar Foundation.

Asked whether the legal case against Suharto now would, Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said: "I will restrain myself too much to discuss the issue as there is about to have the ceremony, the funeral for President Suharto."

Suharto's children

But at a news conference on the sidelines of a separate conference in Bali, Wirajuda added that the government would "respect the legal process applicable to Indonesia."

Analysts say that with the death of Suharto, his children may surrender seasoned scrutiny. Using family connections during Suharto's rule, the children amassed billions through an array of conglomerate companies, allegedly through preferment for contracts, kickbacks and bare regulations.

Many prosecutors are already seeking millions of dollars from Suharto's children to compensate victims. Tommy Soeharto, Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana and Mamiek Soeharto, all children

Success

is a state of mind.
One not only has to be in that state.
One has to live there.

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DID YOU KNOW

AFTER Spain ceded the Philippines to the US in 1898, the American flag was first hoisted by the mayor of Fort San Antonio Abad in Malate, Manila.

The triangular fort, now part of the Gawad Kamanong Filipino complex on Roxas Boulevard, was built in 1762 to improve the defenses of Manila after the British occupation. It was opened after San Antonio Abad who dubbed the monastic movement in the Church.

Cyrill C. Zandueta, Inquirer Research

Ex-Pasay City treasurer suspended

Official has 10 days to file counteraffidavit vs illegal wealth charge

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN YESTERDAY ordered the preventive suspension of a former Pasay City treasurer for allegedly amassing P14 million in unexplained wealth.

Olivia Oliva, who is now the municipal treasurer of Cabuyao, Laguna, was ordered suspended for six months for illegal disbursements and grave misconduct.

The case against Oliva was based on a complaint the Department of Finance-Revenue Integrity Protection Service filed against her at the anti-graft body after it found out that the official had failed to file her statements of assets, liabilities and net worth from 1972 to 2003 and then in 2005 and 2006.

According to the OMB-NIPS, Oliva only filed her SALN for 2004.

A lifestyle check initiated by the Finance department reportedly showed that the former Pasay City treasurer owns three vehicles, two residential lots and a building in Cebu City.

Oliva, however, has denied the OMB findings although the department submitted to the Ombudsman documents reportedly showing her ownership of the vehicles, the two lots and the building.

"From the facts and the evidence presented, there is strong indication that the respondent is administratively guilty of dishonesty or grave misconduct, for having acquired wealth disproportionate to her lawful income or the aggregate amount of P14 million," Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez said in a six-page order issued yesterday.

Oliva has 10 days to file her counteraffidavit upon receipt of the order.

PNA/Julie M. Aurelio

EASY RIDER
A man and his four-legged companion, with a hat and sunglasses for protection from the sun, cut out for a joy ride in Mandaluyong City.

2 robbery suspects slain in QC shootout

By Marlon Ramos

TWO SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF A robbery syndicate were killed in a shootout with police intelligence operatives who tried to arrest them in Quezon City yesterday.

The two men have yet to be identified.

The incident happened exactly a week after three men on board a car were involved in a shootout with policemen on E. Rodriguez Avenue.

A day later, at least 20 heavily armed men robbed the Land Bank of the Philippines branch on Tirad Avenue, also in Quezon City.

Supt. Reynaldo Balba, intelligence chief of the Quezon City Police District, said agents of the District Intelligence and Operations Unit were on routine patrol duty on Pitimini Street, Barangay San Francisco del Monte, at around 9 a.m. when they noticed two men on board a motorcycle acting suspiciously.

Balba said the policemen flagged down the motorcycle but one of its occupants suddenly pulled out a .38 caliber pistol and fired at them.

"My men had no other option but to shoot back and defend themselves," Balba said.

The two men died on the spot. None of the policemen were injured.

Balba said the slain men could be members of a robbery group which preys on people who go to the bank on Mondays.

"Members of the gang would wait for applicants to withdraw or deposit a huge amount and then rob them at gunpoint. That's why we decided to intensify our patrol operations in business districts on Mondays," he explained.

Balba said they would continue their campaign to go after members of the group and other robbery gangs operating in the city.

QCPD wins honors second time around for outstanding achievements

By Julie M. Aurelio

FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW, THE Quezon City Police District won the top honors in ceremonies held yesterday at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan City.

The QCPD was adjudged the Best Police District in Metro Manila for 2005, while its Special Weapons and Tactics team was named the Best SWAT Unit.

The QCPD garnered the same awards in 2004.

On the other hand, the Marikina City Police Station was named last year's best police station.

The awards were handed out by Philippine National Police chief, Director General Avelino Razon Jr., and Director Geary Barias, head of the National Capital Region Police Office.

"After making 2005 a banner year for peace and order, everyone is expected to give it a little bit more, the proverbial extra mile, to make this year even better," Barias said.

Awards were also given out to Senior Supt. Alberto de la Vega (Best Senior Commissioned Officer in Administration), Supt. Rafael Santiago (Best Junior Commissioned Officer in Operations), Chief Insp. Antonio Pranada (Best Junior Commissioned Officer), SPO2 Juanito Lazaro (Best Senior Non Commissioned Officer), PO3 Rosalito Marbella (Best Junior Non Commissioned Officer), Chief Insp. Cleden Aquilino and PO2 Redolfo San Buenaventura (Police Investigators), and Mercedes Dardalano and Manuel Asuncion (Best Non Uniformed Personnel).

The Brig. Gen. Rizzardo Papa Sr. Awards, on the other hand, were given to PO2 Bienvenido Albangan of the Southern Police District who was cited for a shootout incident with a drug syndicate on April 29, 2005, and PO2 Herman Hendi, also of the SPD, for responding to a robbery incident last Saturday.

The SCPD also cited several individuals for their contributions to its programs, among them, Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr., Efrain Lemoine of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. and Amalia Gomez of the Soldiers for Christ Movement Inc.

How can we protect them?

– Jaime Cardinal Sin

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Robbers take P3 million in Quezon City holdup

By Marlon Ramos

SIX HEAVILY ARMED MEN who identified themselves as police officers robbed a warehouse in Kamuning, Quezon City of at least P3 million in cash yesterday.

The well-coordinated robbers also took the firearms of the establishment's watchmen as well as their cell phone and other valuables.

SPO1 Shaliman Parubad, investigator of the Quezon City Police District Station 3, said the six men arrived at the Rama Industrial Terminal on Quirino Highway, Barangay Sienna at 12:40 a.m. yesterday on board an Isuzu Highway sports utility vehicle.

PNP sweatshirts

Clad in sweatshirts with "PNP" (Philippine National Police) markings, the armed men alighted from their vehicle and told watchmen they were police officers.

"As the guards approached them, the robbers pointed their guns at the watchmen and ordered them to open the gate," Parubad told the lawmen.

He said the robbers, armed with M-14 and M-16 assault rifles, quickly disarmed the guards.

Once inside, two of the armed men tied the victims' hands behind their backs, as well as the hands and feet of 12 drivers and helpers they found inside the compound.

Safety vault

Four other men forcibly opened one of the offices inside the warehouse and ransacked a safety vault with at least P3 million in cash, Parubad said.

Apart from the personal belongings of their victims, the suspects also took with them three 12-gauge shotguns and two .38 caliber revolvers belonging to the guards.

Witnesses said they saw the robbers board their vehicle and speed off toward the Balintawak area.

Supt. Marcelino Pedroso, chief of the Theft and Robbery Investigation Division of the QCPD, said the robbery could be an inside job.

Target

Pedroso said the robbers knew exactly where the safety vault was located. "Alam na alam nila yung layo (They know the place). Ordinarily robbers would just wait outside their target establishment," Pedroso added.

"In this case, they just moved in and went directly to where the money was," he said.

Big words from AFP Chief Esperon

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

HE WAS DOING TOUGH TALK story yesterday. "Ugly side of desperado: Jim Ian shoks," which was accompanied by a photo of a photo of a young girl caught smoking a pot, was very disturbing.

The story said that young girls hooked on drugs are having sex with pushers in exchange for a "fix."

But the story is nothing new.

During the mid to the shaku dangge (Dec. number) on Feb. 10, 2006, police caught housewives, some of them with children in tow, in the drug den.

After the fix, the housewives went to the Ilang public market nearby.

So, if parents are worried when their daughters go, husbands should also worry when their wives go before buying food in the market.

* * *

During the raid, I saw an imam (Muslim priest) asking police Director Marcelo Ele Jr., head of the raiding team, if he could be allowed to go because he was going to pray to the mosque.

He had to let him go because the imam might say religious persecution.

In the first place, why was he in the drug den?

An informant told me shoks (methamphetamine hydrochloride) is sold cheaper in the premises of the mosque in Tagaig.

* * *

A Swiss national, Jon Eric Ellinger, 40, is being held at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) jail on a rape complaint by a 16-year-old girl.

My "boardmeeting ears kay Tulfo" staff helped the girl file the rape complaint in the Department of Justice.

The girl said Ellinger offered her a ride while she was shopping in a mall in the Ortigas Center in Pasig.

Instead of taking her home to Cavite, Ellinger took her to his condominium at the Ortigas Center where he allegedly abused her.

My staff and I would like to thank NBI head agent Erwin Lising for helping us arrest Ellinger.

The Swiss reportedly worked on documents for credit card processing of "P-shak" (methamphetamine) at the Union Bank Plaza in Ortigas Center.

* * *

Two women, aged 21 and 24, came to the "boardmeeting" office at 81 Timog Ave., Quezon City to thank us for after they were rescued from a prostitution house in Malaysia last week.

I told them not to thank us but Vice President Noli de Castro.

I sought the vice president's help after the girls' parents came to me for assistance.

The Cavite couple and Valenzuela said had the two women phoned from the white slavery den in Labuan and sent back home.

Noli did that although it was not his job as parachuted adviser on overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

* * *

Mahalaya Sa, Noli!

* * *

The two women said they were maltreated by the den owner, to whom they refused to go out with customers.

One of them is a stunning 19" beauty who used to work at the Cleanwater nightclub, known for its beautiful women, on Quezon Avenue in Quezon City.

I asked her why she had to go to Malaysia when she was earning a lot at Cleanwater from tips from rich customers.

And she didn't have to go out with them.

She said she just wanted adventure.

What an adventure!

* * *

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., whose term was extended by the President for four months, promised to defeat the New People's Army.

Big words!

How could he defeat the NPA with his demoralized troops?

The troops will not die for a regime that is perceived to be the most corrupt, according to a recent Pulse Asia survey.

BAND MEMBER WANNABE
She already has the audition, could a real musical love-answer be far behind? For now, a love for swing with a band in Bangkok, Makati City, has to be content with his ray trumpet. RAY CHAN

Navotas City barangay chair shot dead

By Kristine L. Alave

A BARANGAY CHAIR IN NAVOTAS CITY died on the spot when unknown assailants gunned him down yesterday morning.

Rolando Jun Juan, 34, the chair of Barangay Bangculasi, was shot to death at 7:15 a.m. in front of the barangay hall after he presided over the flag-raising ceremony, investigators of SPO2 Daniel Perez said.

According to Perez, Jun Juan sustained gunshot wounds in the head and in the back and died immediately. The police recovered empty shells from a .45 caliber firearm as the crime scene.

While there were witnesses in the area at the time of the incident, policemen said nobody had given chase or pursued the gunmen.

Bystanders said they saw an unidentified man shoot Jun Juan, while others claimed there were no heard a motorcycle carried out the attack.

Police said they are looking into Jun Juan's background to determine the motive for the killing.

New 2-story market opens in Pasay City

By Julie M. Aurelio

ARSENAL STREETS IN PASAY CITY have been cleared of street vendors with the commencement of a new two-story public market at the corner of Taft and Arnaiz Avenues.

Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad yesterday led the inauguration of the new public market which has a floor area of 3,200 sq. m. It also houses 612 stalls for wet goods and 200 stalls for dry goods.

"This new public market is our legacy to the residents of Pasay City and we should be proud to finally have this after a long time because it is a must," Trinidad said.

"With the opening of a clean, decent and organized market, people will now dread to patronize to buy their basic needs like meat, fish, vegetables, rice and other grocery items," he added.

The opening of the market has helped ease traffic in the area as street vendors on 9 Villanueva and Marcelino Road Streets were relocated to the new facility.

Market master Eddie Mendoza said they would be targeting new vendors in Makabayan and Primera de Mayo Streets and a portion of Taft Avenue.

"By then, other street vendors like those selling fruits, wholesale rice, and other foodstuff, would also be accommodated as soon as their spaces are ready," Mendoza said.

The market will have a parking lot, its own public address system, weighing scales, close restrooms, generator, sewerage treatment plant, ophthalmic clinic, elevators, water motors, a deep-well pump and a consumers welfare desk.

No headlights, no entry for QC-bound vehicles

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A QUEZON CITY COUNCILOR HAS proposed an ordinance that would require motorists to keep their vehicles in good working condition if they want to drive in the city.

Citing the absence of headlights as one of the major causes of road accidents, Councilor Victor Ferrer Jr. said motor vehicles without headlights should be banned from the city's streets.

Under Section 1 of his proposed ordinance, motor vehicles are prohibited from using the highways, avenues, roads, streets and other thoroughfares of Quezon City from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. "without a properly functioning and complete set of headlights and other safety lights."

Ferrer added that the headlights of all motor vehicles, unless parked, must be switched on "at the proper intensity at all times" and should not be turned off because of the slow flow of vehicular traffic.

The ordinance provides a penalty of P1,000 for violators. If passed, it will be enforced by the Office of the City Mayor through the Department of Public Order and Safety.

METRO BRIEFS

Driver in oil tanker fire could still face charges, says NBI

THE NBI'S INITIAL FINDINGS showed that a fire-incident involving an oil tanker on Jan. 23 which left a man dead was an accident, the National Bureau of Investigation said the driver may still be charged for helping the victims. NBI Anti-Terrorism Division Chief Romulo Asto said Leonardo Benamin, 65, could still be charged with reckless imprudence resulting in homicide. "We're still looking into the liability of the driver because he fled after the incident. By doing that, he had a liability because of his failure to help the victims," he said. Benamin was driving the 18-wheel truck carrying 14,000 liters of diesel and 2,000 liters of gasoline on the Nagtahan Bypass near the corner of G.H. Lacson Street in Sampaloc, Manila, when it burst into flames. The fire was apparently caused by a pipe leak. The flames spread to nearby vehicles, instantly killing businessman Melencio Aquino and injuring his wife. The couple were in their car, which was parked by the tanker when the fire occurred. A total of 11 other persons were also burned in the incident. Benamin appeared at the NBI with a lawyer two days after the incident to explain his side. Asto said the culpability of Bj Hauler Inc., the company that owned the tanker, and Pilipinas Shell as its shipper, would be determined as they were responsible for the truck's maintenance.

Jillian M. Lopez

Cops nab suspected robber

POLICE arrested on Sunday night a man who broke into a vehicle parked in front of a church in Mandaluyong City. Chief Insp. Isidro de Guzman of the Criminal Investigation Division identified the suspect as Jeremy Ilagan, 37, a resident of 96 Resort, Las Piñas City. Recovered from his possession were a cell phone, a digital camera, six credit cards, an automated teller machine card, two mother bags and two wallets containing over P40,000 in cash. Senior Insp. Rodolfo Mabuyo, Malabon Police Criminal Investigation Division chief, said Ilagan was arrested at around 8 p.m. Sunday while Alejo and Ilagan were breaking into a vehicle parked in front of the St. James Church in Addition Hills, Mandaluyong. Ilagan was caught when

Bank bares rogue French trader's $73-B bet

PARIS—SOCIETE GENERALE has detailed how a trader evaded all its controls to bet €49B billion ($73.5 billion)—more than the French bank's market value on European markets, saying he hacked computers and "combined several fraudulent methods" to cover his tracks, causing billions in losses.

The bank says the trader, Jerome Kerviel, did not appear to have profited personally from the transactions and seemingly worked alone—a version reiterated Sunday by Jean-Pierre Mustier, chief executive of the bank's corporate and investment banking unit.

But, in a conference call with reporters on Sunday, Mustier added: "I cannot guarantee to you 100 percent that there was no complicity."

Officials said tension was escalating with police, who held him for a second day of questioning Sunday, seeking answers to what, if confirmed, would be the biggest ever trading fraud by a single person.

The questioning was "going very well and the investigation led by the specialists of the financial police is extremely truthful," said Jean-Michel Beffre, head of the financial services of the Paris prosecutor's office.

Kerviel was giving "very interesting" explanations, Mustier added. "From what he told me, he took [his] technological knowledge of the control procedures. So he managed to circumvent what Kerviel might face preliminary charges.

Kerviel, 31, was taken into custody Saturday afternoon. He has not been seen in public since the bank's headquarters revealed Thursday that his unauthorized trades lost it nearly 5 billion ($7.14 billion).

One of his lawyers said Sunday that the accusations of wrongdoing against Kerviel were being used to hide End US mortgage investments by the bank.

"He didn't steal anything, like anything, he didn't take any profit for himself," the lawyer, Christian Chevreux-Bonnaud, said. "The suspicion on Kerviel allows the considerable losses that the bank made on subprimes to be hidden."

The lawyer said Kerviel had made money for the bank through 2007 and he protested that the wrong trades had since been "thrown to the wolves of public opinion."

"He made profits for the bank until December 31. From January 1, he took risky positions like all traders," said the lawyer, who is also president of the Paris bar.

Even before his allegedly massive fraud came to light, Kerviel had apparently triggered occasional alarms at Societe Generale—France's second-largest bank—with his trading, but not to a degree that led managers to investigate further.

"The controls have usually also relied from time to time problems with the trader's portfolio," said Mustier.

But Kerviel exploited every tool he had at trading activities, added Mustier.

"The trade was canceled three times so specific follow-up to do," he said. "There are

The WORLD

Edna Lawrence B. Cuaso

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Thaksin ally elected as new Thailand PM

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S PARliament elected pugnacious right-winger Samak Sundaravej prime minister on Monday as the country returns to representative, civilian government after a bloodless September 2006 coup.

The 72-year-old former Bangkok governor has vowed to push for the return from exile of ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, putting him on a collision course with the army and royalist elite accused of masterminding the coup.

Samak, who is leading a six-party coalition after his People Power Party (PPP) narrowly missed an outright majority on its own, won approval from 310 of the 480 members of parliament.

There was no reaction on the stock and currency markets, where Samak's appointment had been widely expected since the PPP won 233 seats in the Dec. 23 election that marked the end of the army-appointed interim government.

"Undertaking the premiership is an entrusted job and responsibility that I volunteer to do," he told reporters after the vote.

His appointment becomes formal after its endorsement by revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej, expected in the next few days.

Although most Thais are keen to see civilian rule after the incompetence of the post-coup government, fewer than half of the country's 65 million people are happy with Samak in the top job, according to the latest opinion polls.

One assessment by Bangkok's Assumption University showed support for Samak at only 44.5 percent nationwide. He popularity in the capital is likely to be far lower after a less-than-glorious four years as governor.

He is also loathed by the democratic media, although his bellicose nose is a gift to political cartoonists, who typically depict him as a food-mouthed pig bristling at a cough.

Democracy campaigners also regard him with distrust, remembering his vitriolic attacks against student activists in the mid-1970s and support for a bloody crackdown in October 1976 that led to a coup.

He served briefly as interior minister in the military-appointed government.

Reuters

SAMAK

Mormon Church leader Hinckley dies

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH—THE HEAD OF THE Mormon Church, Gordon B. Hinckley, died on Sunday at the age of 97, church officials said.

Hinckley, who was considered a living prophet, had been the 15th president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, founded in 1830, since March 1995.

As word of his death spread, groups of church-goers gathered around the Salt Lake Temple, sharing memories and stories about their prophet.

"The President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has served as a transformational religious leader and tremendous ambassador for Utah with his unprecedented outreach to all corners of the world," said Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman.

"His leadership in humanitarian efforts around the world was matched only by his efforts in his own beloved state and community as a committed citizen. He stood as a remarkable example of selflessness, charity and humility and he will be greatly missed by all," Huntsman added.

The state-isolated group, based in Salt Lake City, Utah., is one of the fastest-growing and most affluent religions, with an estimated 12.9 million in metrics in 1999 and more than $5 billion in annual income. More than half of its 12.9 million members live outside the United States, with a flourishing flock in Latin America.

Church officials said a successor was not expected to be formally chosen by the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles until after Hinckley's funeral within the next few days.

Traditionally, whoever is the longest-serving member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the church's second highest governing body behind the First Presidency, would become the next president.

If tradition holds Thomas S. Monson, born on Aug. 21, 1927, would become the next leader of the Mormon Church, they said.

HINCKLEY

Hinckley, who was born June 23, 1910 in Salt Lake City, Utah, was named one of the most admired men in the world in 2005 for the second consecutive year in a survey of Americans.

In February 2002, he was one of the fourth Relay Bearers prior to the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City.

Hinckley had an executive service in his church prior to taking the top leadership position including service as director of the Mormon Church public communications for 20 years.

He traveled to more than 60 countries around the world on ecclesiastical and corporate affairs of the Church.

In the year 2000, despite his advanced age, Hinckley completed an 11-day tour of the Pacific Rim where he traveled more than 35,000 km and spoke to more than 26,000 people.

He had set a church of goal of having 100 temples built around the world and has surpassed that figure with 120 temples now constructed worldwide.

Reuters

Mormonism—an American religion

THE FOLLOWING ARE FACTS ABOUT THE Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or the Mormon Church as formally called:

■ The Mormon Church has distinctly American origins. It was founded in 1830 in upstate New York by Joseph Smith, who said he restored the word of God from an angel named Moroni, who guided him to tablets that told the story of the Book of Mormon about an ancient civilization of Israelites sent by God to America. Smith could read and translate the tablets...written in what he called "reformed Egyptian" hieroglyphics—with the help of special transparent stones he used as spectacles. A year later, he was persecuted and forced to flee to the Midwest, where he was killed. His followers, later undertook a trek—1,300 mile (1,000-km) migration in 1846-47 to Utah.

■ Mormons have three books of scripture other than the Bible. One is the Book of Mormon, which Mormons believe was translated from golden plates discovered by Smith. Additional scriptures, who decline to use alcohol, coffee and tobacco, believe that God speaks through living apostles and prophets such as the church's president, Gordon Hinckley. Mormons also believe that Jesus visited the Americas after his resurrection and that there is no eternal hell.

■ The Mormon Church originally allowed polygamy. Smith took at least two dozen wives, say historians. His successor, Brigham Young, had about 20. The custom was officially banned in 1890 when Washington, angered by its spread, threatened to deny statehood to Utah. Today Mormon leaders disavow themselves from about 40,000 breakaway Mormons in Utah and nearby states who illegally exercise the practice.

■ Today, almost 50,000 missionaries, often young men in white shirts and ties striking the world's streets in pairs—project a wholesome, family-oriented image that has helped swell global Mormon adherents by 26 percent from 1990 to 2005.

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Tipon wins, sets duel vs Thai rival /A24

SPORTS

Editor Teodylyn S. Maluenda Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

LeBron outplays Kobe as Cavs win /A24

TNT picks Chot

By Mycong B. Cortillo

AMONG ALL THE THINGS SAID about Talk 'N Text, ownership—the look themself—has been the biggest reason why the rock-solid Phone Pals have lost their way they did in the past years.

Enter Vincent "Chot" Reyes.

The firebrand national team tactician agreed to a three-year deal with Talk 'N Text on Sunday, bringing with him one of the most documented and rooted work ethics and intensity in the team most considered to have one, or rediscovered in the past.

"We simply think that he is the best coach to inspire our team," said Talk 'N Text board representative Eddy Vargas during a briefing with select members of the media at the FLTC offices last last night.

"I did say that (Reyes and I are serious to how hard he works," Atienza added. "He are going to be a high performance team."

The Phone Pals failed to make it past the wild card phase of the ongoing Philippine Cup and management decided last week not to renew the pact of coach Derrick Pumaren and replace talks with Reyes.

"I have to make them believe that they (Phone Pals) can win again," Reyes said. "Losing can become a habit and with losing, everything goes haywire."

Reyes' contract is the longest that Talk 'N Text, or since Manny V. Pangilinan brought the franchise from Pepsi in 1998, has given any coach. The former Alaska stalwart in the UAAP will become the franchise's eighth coach overall.

And the guaranteed tenure came as a surprise, since Talk 'N Text management has been known to have asked for nothing less than the championship from its previous coaches before giving them the pink slip.

"Every tournament, our objective will be to win the championship," Reyes told the business when pressed to give a timetable. "But that will never be our focus, our focus will be in the fearless-working, best-conditioned team, and then winning will come later."

The Phone Pals will be Reyes' sixth team after stints with Purefoods, Sta. Lucia, Pop Cola, Coca-Cola and briefly with San Miguel before being asked to handle the national team last year.

PSC to scout Olympic rivals

By Jaime Navarro

APART FROM THE TRAINING AND EXPOSURE of athletes, a part of the P30-million budget for the Olympic program from the Philippine Sports Commission will go to scouting.

PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez said the Olympic task force composed of top officials from the government sports agency and the Philippine Olympic Committee would send coaches overseas to monitor the progress of the Filipino athletes' possible opponents.

Among those who could be "spied on" are the likes of boxer Mary Taffanie and jiter Toni Peteni and fencer Ian.

"They're doing it in the PBA," said Ramirez. "Why can't we do it too?"

ProGear Golf
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'It's CHOT Reyes' turn to walk at he can from the talented but underachieving Phone Pals.

UAAP 'Peeping Tom' ref charged

By Jasmine W. Payo

GENERAL LUNA WOMEN'S VOLLEY ball players filed charges of child abuse and undue exercise yesterday against a football referee, accusing him of video-voyeurism.

The suspect, UAAP football referee Dennis Pabros, was caught taking videos of players in the secondary dressing of the Blue Eagle Gym in Araneta on Sunday afternoon using his mobile phone.

Among those who filed the charges were players University of the East, Far Eastern University, La Salle and University of Santo Tomas.

"Nine players, including two minors from UE already filed complaints; we're expecting the other schools to formally log their complaints (in the coming days)," Major Cherry Lou Dionaso, chief administrator of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation Unit, said yesterday.

Pabros, an accredited referee of the Philippine Football Federation, remains detained at Camp Karingal in Quezon City. The 30-year-old game official is married and resides in Tondo, Manila.

"Sobrang (the) nagpa-report ang iba (and it was just the tricky)," said Dionaso.

Unjust vexation is a bailable offense, but because some of the players were aged below 16, Pabros also faces child abuse charges, which carry a 12-year maximum imprisonment penalty and an P80,000 bail.

Aside from the individual players' complaints, the UAAP board will also discuss if a separate case will be filed against Pabros.

"The incident caused a commotion," said athletic director Gloria Sarmiento of the University of the Philippines, head of the volleyball competitions.

Ricky Pabros, Dennis's representative to the UAAP board, said the school will enforce tighter security measures during the games.

"We're now assigning a guard to make sure that only players can use the area," said Pabros.

The police report said that Pabros was caught perched on the wall dividing the men and women's shower rooms. His confiscated mobile phone showed videos of the players in various forms of undress.

The Philippine Football Federation said it will wait for the official report of the National Capital Region Football Association before acting on Pabros's case.

Woods tops Buck golf

WOODS

SAN DIEGO... Tiger Woods joined the Ring and left everyone else at the Buick Invitational feeling like paupers on Sunday.

In his most dominant start to a season, Woods built an 11-shot lead until his game and the frigid weather turned cold on the back nine. A birdie on the last hole gave him a 1-under 71 and an eight-shot victory, giving him 62 for his career in the Arnold "The King" Palmer era the US PGA Tour hit.

"I'm sure that there are many, many more coming in the future," Palmer said. "There isn't any question about that."

And like there was no question about the outcome.

Woods opened with a 40-foot birdie putt, threw in a 60-foot birdie just to keep a boisterous gallery from falling asleep, and only looked mortal when he made three straight bogeys toward the end.

It allowed the 8-foot margin, not the norm in the trophy.

Woods finished at 19-under 269 to win the Buick Invitational for the fourth consecutive year, tying a US PGA Tour record for consecutive wins in a single tournament. Woods is the only player to own such a streak in two events, having also won four in a row at Bay Hill.

Brad Faxon matched the best score of the final round with a 67 and was runner-up.

Woods returns to Torrey Pines in June for the US Open, and if this week was any indication, it could be another long week for his peers.

"What he's going to do is screw the US Open up for everyone else," Fred Couples said. "If he had shot 16 or 11 under, the USGA would have said, Well, maybe we have it to the right spot.' Now, they may have to regroup a little."

13th DHL Nat'l Amateur tees off today

TOURNEY COMPETITION IS EXPECTED when the 13th DHL-PAWB/Inquirer National Amateur Golf Championship tees off today at the challenging north course of the Canlubang golf complex in Laguna.

Defending national champion Anthony Fernando will lead about 300 players, including foreign bets, in the four-day test at the total yardage par-72 layout.

Hilding Ho (traditional ceremonial driver ace Transportation and Communication Secretary and MGAP president Larry Mendoza, Rod Feliciano, Joe Feliciano and Dawn Itchon of DHL, and Gangell executive director Lolgi Polo.

Singapore's top amateur Quincy Quek begged off at the last minute to honor a previous commitment back home but Malcolm Fung and Muhammad Emirul of Malaysia are a big number of Koreans are expected to give the hosts stiff opposition.

The 54-hole ladies tournament starting instructor is also expected to be interesting with 78-Japanese Chihiro Ikeda and Indonesian Lydia Ivana Jaya renewing their recent rivalry in the Philippine Ladies Open.

Ikeda tallied four three strokes down to top Jaya for the IGP Ladies title at the nearby The Country Club course earlier this month.

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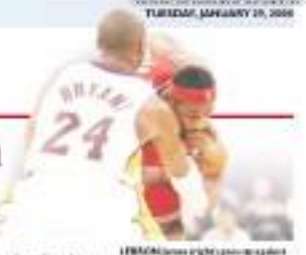
SPORTS

LeBron outplays Kobe as Cavs win



LEBRON (arms aloft) goes up against the defensive Kobe Bryant.

LOS ANGELES—LEBRON JAMES WON a personal duel against Kobe Bryant to help the Cleveland Cavaliers overcome a nine-point deficit in the stretch run to a 98-95 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Sunday.

James scored 14 of his 41 points in the fourth quarter when the Cavaliers, who had trailed 84-75, rallied to win for the eighth time in 10 games.

"We played another great game," James told reporters.

"We've been playing extremely well the last two months and once again we continue to play well, we continue to defend and that's what gives us a chance to win."

Bryant had 31 points for the Lakers, who lost to a third consecutive game.

Los Angeles had the ball for the final nine seconds but could not get a shot off until Bryant, after a pass from Luke Walton, launched a three-point attempt after the buzzer.

"I doubled the ball a little bit, turned around the clock was so low as it was and seconds I passed it back to Kobe, I realized that that was a mistake and unfortunately it cost us [the]," Walton said.

James said Cleveland's celebrator in the final seconds was instrumental in the victory.

"So accolades to the defense that we did and sure were give them a shot was given by everybody that was on the court," James said.

Bryant said he was unhappy with the chances the Lakers had given away in crucial games.

"We just have stretches of mental lapses, putting points on the free throw line when you have a good system, giving them those opportunities to get back in the game," he said.

Bryant had 12 rebounds and six assists to go with his 31 points. Lamar Odom added 14 points.

Tipon sets semis duel vs Thai rival

THE REFEREE dos-a-dos Jean Tipon (left) the winner of the bout.

BANGKOK—LIGHT FLYWEIGHT STANDing Jean Tipon rode an unlucky bout and close, tense punching to nail trouble-free into the semifinals via a clinical third-round stoppage of Pakistan's Ali Muhammad (CRSC-G, 11-1) on May 5 of the Asian Olympic Qualifying Tournament here Monday.

Tipon was so dominating the lopsided exchange after Tipon jump-started and caught his slow, flustered foe with a series of undisputed head shots to score a solid 9-0 lead in the opening round.

With his consistent churning and pounding Tipon to prod it on, the 21-year-old son of fish vendors from Talisay, Negros Occidental turned the rest of the bout into a clinical display of most scientific punching to the awe of the sparse pro-Thai crowd.

Workout

The fight, as a whole, appeared more like a regular workout for Tipon, who said his friend Mohammad is a lot faster than his previous foe Sonia Jordan, whom he confronted, 15-1, on Sunday.

The win, his second straight after he drew a third-round bye, sent Tipon on a collision course with Wanjaya Pitchkaew, the Thai Athens Olympic silver medalist whom he stood in the semifinal round on Friday, Feb. 1.

A win over Pitchkaew will automatically seal Tipon a spot in this year's Beijing Olympics.

"All depends on how they would score it," PF coach Ike Ilarde said of their chances against Pitchkaew, who conquered Tipon, the lone Filipino left fighting here, in the Chicago World Olympics qualifying tournament.

Pit-Sin fight swifter-weight Adrian Rapsing Paul followed three other PF fighters in the ring late Sunday after he was stopped in the second round by Mongolia's Byambo Tsedendorj in the final bout of the day's 20-fight program at the Dhurakij Pundit University sports center here.

Good fight

Although the PF coaching staff claimed Pek Moreno did not appear to be in top form and is no lock for the Chicago tournament, Tipon will be made to spar with teammate Orlando Tesayna Jr., who will simulate the moves of the Thai ring southpaw.

"Magandang laban [It will be a good fight,]" Tipon said on what to expect in the second round bout.

He refused to make a prediction and humbly advised interviewers to just watch him fighting.

The Tipon-Pek Moreno bout is a clash between stock who have split their past two fights and who won similar knockout and stoppage scores.

It is also being touted as a possible fight of the tournament.

Visible Style, Emmanuel Rosales and Tesayna were the other boxers already eliminated from the quest to bag Olympic berths.

Big field joins Southern Ladies

LUTHER TORRES AND JAIMEE REPORTERS

Another major golf tournament with stars is expected to join the hard-fought tussle at the 45th staging of the season on Feb. 5 to 8 at the Baguio Golf and Country Club in Benguet Overlook.

Host Baguio Golfers Country Club, spearheaded by Senator Manuel Roxas Jr., Congressman Ronald Cosalan and Governor Nestor Fongwan, and a roster of teams in the 64-hole tournament.

ICTSI is also bidding its own team composed of the country's top players, headed by reigning PPA Cebu Open champion Dennis Santa and ISEA Davao's new member Jaya Tangalos.

Reigning Crystal Star of Bulldozer seeks added title to be individual competitor of the event.

Registration is ongoing, according to the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines. Tournament host is pegged at P2,000 per player. Deadline is on Feb. 3.

For details, call (02) 5250000, 309 (NSCTSI) or (024) 4487 104, fax (024) 4720 7702 (CC: 524 1437, or e-mail atlantis@pgcpl.com, or log on to www.pgcpl.com.

Koreans dominate Eagle Ridge

KOREAN GOLFERS OPENED THE YEAR WITH A dominating show in the metro tournament for the Eagle Ridge monthly tournament recently in Cavite.

Kyoung Suh Park (224) 74, Kyung Chul Hong (Cavite B) and Jung Sang Choi (Apartelento) posted identical winning scores to capture the top honors.

Park scored a 42 and came out the winner of a three-way tie to the title after a countback. Hong, who prevailed in a playoff after a 42 and Choi over his shoulder by one stroke following a tournament-best 41 at Dasmariñas course.

Other individual winners in the various flights of Filipinos in the women's side as also settled 1-07 for a four-shot win over Korean Kyoung Ae Kim in Class A.

Lilo Jovenkov settled 1-73 to beat Rose Ann Tenorio in Class B after the Koreans scores of the Eagle Ridge golf complex.

Leonora Valera in Time beat Cheng Ann Lee, 81-88, in the championship division of the event sponsored by Golfmasters and PocSports.

It members monthly 18 here after Feb. 9 while a Valentine's monthtrading formula-style tourney is scheduled for a noon for mid-holes of Feb. 16.

Gift of health

CLEAN LIVING

Manuel M. Dayao

THIS IS SO SWEET FOR A NEW health product that hit the market only recently but I say it is worth giving it a try because the product relies years, helps improve blood circulation, promotes the natural healing process of the body and enhances performance.

As cardio health competitors and recreational athletes can benefit from it, along with those who love active lifestyles.

For instance, Alaska team runner Fred Uytongco gave glowing reviews to all his players, who, only last Friday, finished a semifinal slot in the Smart PBA Philippine Cup opposite new semifinalist Sta. Lucia Realty Inits with most national men's and women, and individual runners, triathlon champion David Chambers and former swimmer Christine Jacob and her husband, triathlete Paco Lucaban.

According to Ronnie Cabanayan, general manager of Sports Entertainment, Event Management Inc. (Vemma), Philippine distributor of Pitino, a breakthrough technology from Japan, international sports legend like the formula are Sydney Earl Cumbaud, baseball player Randy Johnson and Japanese marathoner Naoko Takahashi are already using Pitino products and are benefiting from using them.

Pitino is a Japanese brand name. It was Yoshihiro Maida who developed the Child Process for Pitino, a water carbonated isotonic-iodide formula of tourmine, gold and silver are used to promote blood circulation without the latter being in toxic, resulting the new nutrient called supramind. These metals are then incorporated into Pitino products, which include bar and liquid type, supports such as color, bandages, and gel pads, cup guard, supporters for the elbow, ankle, knee, wrist and shoulder and fashionable T-shirts usually available at selected Mister Maids outlets in Power Sports. The Pitino line of products is distributed by Vemma.

Aldren's Rest and Today's menu

IT is still crybaby's game in the best-of-7 semifinal series between early semifinalists Purefoods and Sta. Lucia Realty against newcomer the Red Bull and streaking Alaska, respectively, in the Smart PBA Philippine Cup.

Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez are scheduled to arrive on Feb. 7 for their March 15 rematch at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Pacquiao and Marquez will be fighting for the third time in their careers. Pacquiao won the first fight by a split decision in March 2004 and the second fight by a unanimous decision in May 2005.

Pacquiao and Marquez will be fighting for the third time in their careers. Pacquiao won the first fight by a split decision in March 2004 and the second fight by a unanimous decision in May 2005.

World Slasher derby kicks off

THE INITIAL CLASH BETWEEN LOCAL and international cockfighting greats this year takes the spotlight today with the commencing of the 3rd Philippine National Slasher Derby at the Araneta Coliseum.

Some 160 entries will vie entries in the two-day event featuring foreign breeders Peggy Doherty of Georgia, Benny Esparza of California, Teja Arora of Chicago, Greg Hanson of Hawaii and Thomas Mendoza of Georgia, among others.

The local participants are Jerry Palacanis, Patrick Antonio, Eddy Lim, Eddie and Rene Gonzales, Gaetan Zenarro, Benny Sandoval, Bo Chavez, Raymond Delgado and other regulars in the Philippine cockfighting circuit.

The 2-week qualifying round is scheduled today and tomorrow followed by the 1-week semifinal slugfest on Jan. 27. The four selected contenders will battle at the 4-cock championship on Feb. 3.

The event is hosted by the Philippine Gamefowl Commission and Araneta Coliseum. Protocol Events Management Corporation (PEMC) and Rancho Energy Corp. For more details, log onto www.philippinegamefowl.net, or www.thelordlimited.com.ph. For further inquiries, call (02) 8 724 1000 local 8288.

Gorres, foe tip scales on Friday

THE OFFICIAL WEIGH-IN FOR MIlkdaddy "Bora ni Mama" and fellow-boxing former world champion Ali Oumbaiman ngainst Filipino Z Gorres will be held on Friday at 7 p.m. at the Crest Room of Philsports Cubao (QC) Hotel.

Dumbaiman, dethroned by Filipino Mark Bonifacio Jr. at IBF super flyweight champion last year, and Gorres will clash for 12 rounds at the same Winterhorn Extra City Hotel for the right in challenge IBF titlepro flyweight champ Daisuke Kitlice.

Meanwhile, mere members of Team Bawbawan are expected to join the festivities from Indonesia where they attended the Chris John-Vincent Cabalboc showdown.

Also arriving today is unbeaten William Bichel, who will see action in the undercard opposite local fighter Ramon Jabonidon.

Las Vegas-based Tony Martin is also scheduled in action on base for the fight to serve as rematch for Gorres.

Martin also served as Gorres' sparmate when the more punishing Filipino fashed WBO super fly champion Ivan Hernandez that last year. Sadayo [illegible]

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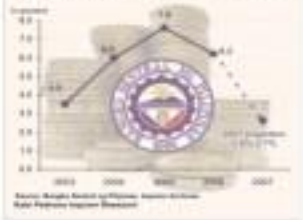
Peso seen firming up at 38.50-39 to $1

INQUIRER MONITOR



Cuisia: 'Positives' of strong peso will outweigh 'negatives'

By Doris C. Dumlao

FORMER CENTRAL BANK Ggovernor JOSE CUISIA JR. SEES the peso firming up at 38.50 to 39 against the dollar by year's end on sustained foreign exchange inflows from overseas remittances, portfolio investments and business process outsourcing.

"There are positives and negatives but I think the positives will outweigh the negatives such that the peso will continue to strengthen," said Cuisia, now the president of the country's biggest insurer, Philippine American Life & General Insurance Co.

Cuisia said the most optimistic forecast he had seen so far was at 37.50 by yearend but noted this was "probably very aggressive."

"I think it's possible that the peso will end at 39 to 38.50 at the end of 2008. I'm confident that for 2008, we'll see a further strengthening of the peso and exporters will have to factor that to their pricing," he said.

Unfortunately, he said the strong peso was also hurting the overseas Filipino workers by reducing the peso-equivalent of their earnings.

Cuisia said the peso would likely labor when demand for imports rises starting in the second quarter as traders and manufac-

PESO B4

New policies, programs seen from Energy Summit

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY EXpects new policies, programs and legislation—to be implemented in the short, medium and long term—to come out of the Energy Summit that will be held in the next three days.

In a briefing yesterday Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the summit is aimed to bring together various energy sector stakeholders to enable them to air their views and exchange ideas on how the country could better cope with energy-related problems now and in the future.

Assured of just having the DOE come up with solutions or solutions to the coming years, he said all stakeholders would be given a chance to give their inputs to ensure that all issues would be addressed on all fronts.

"The landscape is literally littered with corpses of dead countries, but this will not be added to that long list. This is a learning and learning summit. We're engaging all stakeholders to discuss their issues with the experts," he said.

"We'll come up with action plans on a collaborative basis. Those plans should be implemented immediately or in the next six months, in the short term on within one year, in the medium term or within two to five, and in the long term or five years and beyond," he added.

As the culmination of the three-day summit, which will be capped by the presentation of the action plans to President Macapagal-Arroyo, the government should have a clearer idea of how to deal with various energy issues, considering all stakeholders, in the coming years.

The whole process would not end with just the presentation of the action plans, he said, as the summit aimed to institutionalize the monitoring mechanisms that would ensure the implementation of all plans to be formulated.

"The summit is not meant to solve all the problems of the energy sector. We just want them to be positive, inclusive and solutions-oriented. It will not solve all our energy problems, but it doesn't mean that we won't achieve anything from it," he added.

More than 100 individuals from various sectors...including government and private energy companies, consumers, transport groups, industry, nongovernment organizations and the academe—will serve as resource speakers and panelists during the summit, which opens today and runs until Jan. 31. It will formally end with the presentation of the action plans on Feb. 1.

While Reyes was optimistic of the summit's outcome, the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, in keeping with its usual position that the summit was an exercise in futility, has decided not to join the summit at all.

Reyes personally presented the summit invitation to the group last week, but this was not enough to convince it to see size of its efforts as a panelist in one of the summit sessions.

"The Energy Summit is being funded

NEW POLICIES B4

CURRENCIES

JAN 29/07

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 40.88 = $ 1

As of 8:15 a.m. Jan. 28, 2008

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

JAN 29/07

(See stock market report on Page B3)

Stocks down 1.1%

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.1 percent lower yesterday in cautious trading ahead of the US Federal Reserve's regular meeting, dealers said.

Local investors were reported to remain cautious ahead of most Thursday when the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is expected to announce a cut in interest rates, they said.

The composite index fell 33.06 points to close at 2,920.06, off a low of 2,913.11.

There were 77 decliners and 29 advancers, while 51 stocks were unchanged.

Volume totaled 190.6 million shares worth ₱5.4 billion.

"Wall Street's downturn [on] Friday came as a reminder for us to remain cautious," said Rommel Marquigal, chief of Maybank Global Equities.

DETAILS B4

UN team to review Bataan nuclear plant

AN EIGHT-PERSON team from the United Nations-affiliated International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be conducting a review of the mothballed 620-megawatt (MW) Bataan Nuclear Power Plant to aid the country in deciding whether or not to pursue nuclear power generation.

Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the group flew in Sunday and would visit the BNPP site in Morong, Bataan, today. Its initial report would then be submitted to the DOE by Friday.

Led by the group's nuclear power director Mark Gerasin, the team members are Indonesian Ari Ashi and the Pacific-centric head Zhang Jing, nuclear power division technical officer Ki Jig Kang, nuclear safety and installations division technical officer David Greaves and nuclear safety and security division technical officer Gita Hernandez.

Another part of the group are consultant and legal infrastructure experts

UN TEAM B4

IN THIS ISSUE

The 2008 Davos Forum/B3

BSP seen to cut rates by 50 bps on Thurs/B4

GOING BALD?
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First Gen to list bonds in Singapore

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ-OWNED FIRST GEN Corp. has applied to list $260 million worth of convertible bonds with the Singapore Stock Exchange, from which it hopes to raise cash to refinance existing debt and fund its acquisition of a majority stake in PNOC Energy Development Corp.

The listing application is standard procedure for convertible bonds such as the $260 million worth that the power firm issued last Jan. 15.

The Singapore bourse will serve as a venue for the trading of the convertible bonds.

In an earlier interview, First Gen executive vice president and chief operating officer Ricardo Tantoco said the proceeds from the bond issue would be used to finance the company's acquisition of a 60 per

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CURRENCIES

January 28, 2008	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
Australia	Dollar	1.00	0.8888	44.9100
Japan	Yen	100.00	0.8888	44.9100
United Kingdom	Pound	1.00	1.9888	89.1600
Hong Kong	Dollar	10.00	0.1277	5.7300
New Zealand	Dollar	1.00	0.7300	32.7700
Canada	Dollar	1.00	0.8888	40.0500
Singapore	Dollar	1.00	0.6888	30.1400
Switzerland	Franc	1.00	0.8888	39.7400
Denmark	Krone	1.00	0.1888	8.0100
Sweden	Krona	1.00	0.1388	6.2100
South Korea	Won	100.00	0.0888	3.9800
Brunei	Dollar	1.00	0.6888	30.1400
Indonesia	Rupiah	1.00	0.0001	0.0044
Thailand	Baht	1.00	0.0288	1.2300
EMU	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
Norway	Krone	1.00	0.1588	7.1200
Kuwait	Dinar	1.00	3.2888	147.7000
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	1.00	0.2688	11.9700
Libya	Dinar	1.00	0.7888	35.4400
United Arab Emirates	Dirham	1.00	0.2688	12.2400
Bahrain	Dinar	1.00	2.6888	120.8000
Egypt	Pound	1.00	0.1888	8.4800
Mexico	Peso	1.00	0.0888	3.9900
Jordan	Dinar	1.00	1.4088	63.2900
Lebanon	Pound	1.00	0.0006	0.0266
Malaysia	Ringgit	1.00	0.2888	12.9700
Taiwan	Dollar	1.00	0.0288	1.2800
Turkey	Lira	1.00	0.7888	35.4400
Germany	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
Denmark	Krone	1.00	0.1888	8.0100
Finland	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
France	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
Greece	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
Ireland	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
Italy	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
Netherlands	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
Portugal	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
Spain	Euro	1.00	1.4888	66.8600
Switzerland	Franc	1.00	0.8888	39.7400
Denmark	Krone	1.00	0.1888	8.0100
Sweden	Krona	1.00	0.1388	6.2100
Norway	Krone	1.00	0.1588	7.1200
Japan	Yen	100.00	0.8888	44.9100
Canada	Dollar	1.00	0.8888	40.0500
Australia	Dollar	1.00	0.8888	44.9100
New Zealand	Dollar	1.00	0.7300	32.7700
Singapore	Dollar	1.00	0.6888	30.1400
Hong Kong	Dollar	10.00	0.1277	5.7300
Brunei	Dollar	1.00	0.6888	30.1400
Switzerland	Franc	1.00	0.8888	39.7400
Denmark	Krone	1.00	0.1888	8.0100
Sweden	Krona	1.00	0.1388	6.2100
Norway	Krone	1.00	0.1588	7.1200
Japan	Yen	100.00	0.8888	44.9100
Canada	Dollar	1.00	0.8888	40.0500
Australia	Dollar	1.00	0.8888	44.9100
New Zealand	Dollar	1.00	0.7300	32.7700
Singapore	Dollar	1.00	0.6888	30.1400
Hong Kong	Dollar	10.00	0.1277	5.7300
Brunei	Dollar	1.00	0.6888	30.1400

The 2008 Davos Forum

I WENT TO THE DOCTOR AND complained that every time I would sip, I saw Mother Teresa. Ronald Reed and Goody Ho asked, "How long have you been having these illusions?"

You see other forms of egocentrism but you have to watch out. This is the current economic event of the year and I encourage you to log 70 till work. All the top people were there—Bill Gates, George SOROS, Presidents, Prime Ministers, heads of banks and security brokers but my favorites got lost in the mist. Still, it was interesting to see what BLOOMBERG over day and I was struck by the diversity of views as to whether the US will go into recession. My own view on this is known and we can't put by Richard GROT discussed 2-1 in favor of a slowdown and 1.8 in favor of a recession so I am with the majority.

The article I tucked out for Thursday was simply an unmet from my 4-page daily newsletter, which devotes a third to the bank markets, a third to conventional news and a third to speculation on the top 100 stocks. This includes prices, charts, net foreign buying or selling and most important of all, the risk factor. I wrote it feeling pleased because I had correctly predicted the rise cut and the stimulus package both, so why is the risk back up over 3pp

SBMA signs deal with Dubai-based firm for $250-M venture

By Roland N. Dantiago

THE SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN Authority has signed a memorandum of understanding with Dubai-based Jadaa International for a $250-million project involving further development of the Subic Bay Seaport.

Armand C. Arreza, SBMA Administrator, said in a phone interview that the MOU was signed in Dubai yesterday during the official visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo to the United Arab Emirates.

Jadaa is a unit of holding company Dubai World, which is considered the world's fourth-largest marine terminal operator.

The investment from Jadaa will be tallied into the Subic Bay project over three to five years.

According to a statement posted on Jadaa International's website, the agreement covered Jadaa's proposal for the phased lease and consolidation of four areas within the Subic Bay Freeport to form an industrial or logistics zone, including the renewal and re-alignment of a residential and leisure area.

The four areas being considered are the industrial technopark, Boton wharf, Subic International Airport and the residential Cubi area.

Jadaa Hatch, Dubai World chief executive, said the Philippines' trade and economic policies and the strategic location of Subic Bay not only gave it an edge as an investment area but also made it an ideal gateway to Asian markets.

"The Subic Bay freeport fits well in our agenda of forming beneficial alliances and expanding operations to vital business destinations around the world, as well as our intentions to form a truly global logistics network," Hatch said.

Also on Sunday, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry an MOU aimed at strengthening and expanding trade, economic, scientific, technological cooperation for both countries.

Under the agreement, businessmen from both countries would work on the strengthening and expanding business relations between concerned organizations aside from assisting their members in establishing and strengthening business contacts.

In 2007, the Philippines ranked 46th among Dubai's largest direct trading partners.

Philippine exports to the UAE include garments, consumer electronics, footwear, jewelry or make-up accessories, automotive parts and accessories, air-conditioning machines as well as furniture.

UAE exports to the Philippines include petroleum oils, butane, propane, aluminum alloys and urea.

Philam Asset launches 7th mutual fund

THE PHILAM GROUP HAS LAUNCHED THE Philippines' first mutual fund that invests exclusively in overseas high-grade securities, particularly in the United States and in "euro issues" or European countries that accept and use euros.

Philam Asset Management Inc. (Philam) yesterday said its 7th mutual fund, the AIG Global Bond Fund Philippines Inc., was targeting for its market high networth individuals and institutions seeking investment diversification and a safe investment option. The fund is promoted by London-based AIG Investments, a global broker-to-asset management.

"AIGBFP is the Philippines' first 100-percent globally invested mutual fund for individuals and institutions that would like to invest in the international financial markets," said Jose Cunia Jr., president of the Philippine American Life & General Insurance Co. and chair of Philam.

"A low-risk multicurrency fund made available via US dollar (investment denomination), AIGBFP invests only in investment grade global fixed-income securities. Time income (investing only) to 5000 or higher type of securities," Cunia said in a press briefing.

The mutual fund has four million shares with a par value of P1.00 (US$0.02) offered to the public at current net asset value. It has a capitalization of $10,000 currently subscribed and paid for by current stockholders.

Investors can avail themselves of AIGBFP for a minimum of $10,000 and a minimum additional investment of $1,000.

Fund presidents Karen Lim Ros and 68 percent of the fund is invested in fixed-income debt securities issued by sovereign nations from the 20 Group of industrialized economies.

Based on the prospectus distributed to investors, the fund's share of the bond equivalent to about 40 percent was invested in euro issues while about 27 percent was invested in US securities. Some allocations were also provided for Japan (11.6 percent) and United Kingdom (3 percent). *Doris C. Dumlao*

BSP may cut rates by 50 bps on Thursday

Another option is to lessen dependence on special deposit accounts

By Doris C. Dumlao

NEW YORK-BASED THINK-TANK GLOBALSource sees the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas cutting its benchmark interest rates this Thursday by at least 50 basis points to ease the impact on the domestic economy of a US economic slowdown and to support the peso's strengthening against the dollar.

GlobalSource said the BSP might opt to reduce its reliance on the high-yielding special deposit account (SDA) which has been effective in mopping up excess liquidity in the financial system, but noted that the release of liquidity would likely be done on a gradual basis.

"Monetary policy will likely be geared toward lessening the impact of an expected slowdown in the economy with external demand widely seen to decline along with the drop in US demand," said a Jan. 23 GlobalSource commentary written by economists Romeo Bernardo and Margarita Gonzales.

"The peso appreciation, which can be tempered by a policy rate cut. Is by keeping interest differentials tight, likewise to ensure a runaway given the weakening exports and dwindling incomes of overseas Filipino workers, who have helped fuel the country's consumption-led growth," the paper said.

The economists said the US Federal Reserve's sharp interest rate cuts would encourage further reductions in the domestic policy rates, though not by an equivalent amount in view of potential inflationary pressures this year.

GlobalSource expects prices to rise to the upper half of the government's target band (3.8 percent) by the first semester as a result of a sharp rise in food and fuel prices and surging wages late year, apart from simple base effects.

The US Fed slashed its targeted benchmark rate—the rate at which banks lend to one another—by 75 basis points last week in an emergency move and it is expected to cut its rates by another 50 basis points on Wednesday.

Several quarters expect the BSP to also cut its overnight borrowing and lending rates by 50 basis points to 4.75 percent and 6.75 percent, respectively, in the morning on Thursday of policy-making Monetary Board.

GlobalSource said it agreed with the anticipated 50 basis point rate cut by the BSP cut.

"There is likelihood, however, of a deeper cut at the Thursday meeting seen in its more earnings. If the Fed further slashes its policy rates," the report said.

GlobalSource said the expectation of a substantial cut in Philippine policy rates was supported by the slowdown in liquidity growth, brought about by greater access to SDAs.

"There is a growing view that the central bank—it should rely is so instead of cutting policy rates—may resort with the issuances of SDAs to make them less attractive, respectively as the inflation outlook may not allow monetary authorities to trim down rates by much," GlobalSource said.

"Alternatively, monetary authorities may choose to reduce reliance on SDAs via a gradual release or by simply allowing deposits to mature and letting the funds to seep back directly into the system," it said.

The BSP made the SDAs a powerful mopping up tool by allowing banks' trust departments as well as government corporations to tap this facility.

While the rates are set at a premium over the overnight borrowing rates, SDAs have lower margin given its close reliance to the central bank's overnight borrowings.

RLC, JPMorgan forge alliance

By Elizabeth Sanchez Lacson

ROBINSONS LAND CORP. IS aiming its budget for property projects in 2008 to P15 billion from about P7 billion, company president Frederick Go said.

In a phone interview, Go said the amount would be earmarked for all the property projects currently implemented such as malls, hotels and condominiums.

In another development, the company said it had forged an alliance with investment bank JPMorgan Chase Bank N.A.

The deal is expected to strengthen RLC's cash management services for the international market, shortening the clearing period for payments for housing projects purchased by the firm's international home buyers.

The international market makes up about 15 percent of RLC's residential sales.

RLC said the disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange that the increased efficiency brought about by JPMorgan's cash management services would result in a much quicker turnaround time and convenience for RLC's growing number of buyers in the United States, Europe and Asia.

Instead of taking one to two months to clear foreign checks deposited with RLC for house purchases, the tie-up would allow checks to be cleared upon deposit or around one to two days, sources said.

RLC, which has a forward-looking approach to meet the demands of the international market," said RLC vice president for operations Ricardo Tan.

Tan added that while RLC was focused in developing the best residential condominiums in the Philippines, from the beach to the north, it should also be able to provide a reliable and efficient customer service.

JPMorgan managing director and senior country officer Roberto Ongpin said that with JPMorgan's foreign exchange and global bond trading capabilities, RLC would be able to realize time and cost savings.

RLC has presence in Los Angeles, San Diego, Hawaii, Boston, Las Vegas, San Francisco, New Jersey, Florida, and Chicago. It has also established a strong following in Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom with a series of sold-out shows held recently.

Some of RLC's 22 residential condominium projects were highlighted in the said road shows—The Fort Residences and The Trion Towers, two of RLC's three projects in the booming Bonifacio Global City; Brandeville Victoria Mansions, a subdivision community in Paranaque; and Antipo, the firm's first residential resort in Mactan, Cebu.

Mr. Bearbull

From page B1

speak English, are by nature internally and are scrutinized constantly in an area, which is largely non-threatening.

The CBD is running $400 million in local stocks because of liquid marketability and $5 billion abroad to take advantage of lower prices. Hotels will become more attractive to tourists as two casinos will be built in PHOC which will bring the total to 18.CCOB CITY. The 800 hectare site will include hotels, theme parks, commercial and residential properties. China-town will also undergo a facelift with restaurants and retail outlets. FILCCOB will be turned into a night market that they have in Bangkok and Hong Kong.

In the future, I will concentrate on world markets rather than jobs. Sadly, not many colonists write about the macroeconomic sense, which is a pity. The FED is sponsoring a share country on the stock market next month. It will open three overpass and seven intersections and residential analysts but for small investors, the fee of P5000 is rather high. mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Peso seen firming up at 38.50-39 to $1

From page B1

ing the losing; BPG seems, with the annual windfall now estimated at about $3 billion.

"That has also contributed to the strengthening of the peso and that's expected to continue gaining," he said.

He said Philam's parent company AIG group was itself expanding its IPO business in the country and would soon inaugurate its second hub in Alabang.

He said the BSP, for its part, would likely continue adhering to advice from the US Federal Reserve's interest rate cuts to curb the peso's appreciation.

Insurance firm sees lower profit in 2008

AN ENTHUSIASTIC GLOBAL MARKET brought about by a likely recession in the United States and a slowdown in the European and Japanese economies, has pursued a less rosy outlook for the local insurance and fund-management industries this year.

"2007 was good for life insurance and asset management companies, and 2008 is going to be a challenging year for us. Yields may not be as high as in 2006 to 2007 and 2007," Jose L. Cuisia, president and chief executive officer of Philamlife, said in a briefing yesterday.

Cuisia said insurance and fund management firms enjoyed robust gains from their investments in the stock market and fixed-income instruments in 2006 until the third quarter of 2007.

But he said the US subprime market crisis, which began in the latter part of 2007 and was seen to continue this year, and the expected slowdown in the global economy made it less easier for the industries to earn double-digit gains this year.

The Philippine Life Insurance Association, of which Philam is a member, has estimated that the industry recorded a 20% percent growth in revenues in 2007. That is largely hinged on the popularity gained by investment-linked insurance products. *Michelle V. Rosa*

Peso seen firming up at 38.50-39 to $1

From page B1

investor level up their investment by the third until fourth quarters.

He said high crude prices would also tempt the peso's the while foreign flows reports were expected to be lower given the existing headwinds in US economy.

After rallying for three straight days after a surprise 75-basis point cut by the US Fed last week, the peso yesterday pulled back alongside a regional currency market weakened by renewed concerns on the US economy.

The dollar was quoted at about 13 centavos to close at 40.30, down from Friday's finish of 40.80 at the Philippine Dealing System.

Volume traded at the foreign exchange market thinned to $570.37 million from Friday's $625.5 million.

Cunia said remittances would still likely remain strong based on the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' forecast for this year.

The BSP expects overseas Filipino remittances channel through banks surging by another 10 percent this 2008, or to $15.7 billion, from $14.3 billion in 2007. Total remittances last year are set to hit $16.2 billion, including money sent through non-banking channels, representing a year-on-year growth of 11 percent over the expected aggregate level of $15 billion for 2007.

Aside from remittances, he said portfolio investments or those that going to local stocks and bonds would likely support the local currency.

"The Philippine market is still one of the better performing markets in Asia. If that continues, portfolio investments will come in as investors look at others they can get better yields," Cunia said.

Data from the central bank's chief also cited rising foreign exchange receipts generated by OFWs. These are the same local-ing that income increased on exploiting the Philippines' potential sources of alternative and renewable energy" he added.

New policies, programs seen ...

From page B1

and directed by big multilateral lending institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the US Agency for International Aid. The more involvement of these organizations as program partners of the DOE is already an indicator of the real drama of

summit," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said.

"These are the same foreign banks that pushed the Oil Deregulation Law during the

more run just in the process of making bilateral studies on whether or not it should again consider in nuclear power production.

"I'm not ready to commit to anything other than studying (the possibility). We will not just jump into anything. What we are saying is to keep our options open—get and train people in nuclear technology. What we don't want is a power shortage situation," he said. Abigail L. Ha

UN team to review Bataan nuclear plant

From page B1

John Damen from Australia and consultants and nuclear power engineers from Brazil and Ivan Postaru from Romania.

Reyes said the group would not decide for the country whether or not it should rehabilitate the nuclear power generation. It would merely make a recommendation on whether it would be the best way to go—to rehabilitate and to fire the BNPP to convert it to a plant that runs another type of fuel, or to just junk it altogether.

"In other words, they will not recommend to us to either operate or not operate it, or rehabilitate or not rehabilitate. They will just advise us on what we have to do to arrive at that decision. But we are not compelled to accept any of their recommendations," he said.

He explained that the IAEA was put up to assist in transferring technology and giving advice to countries that were considering nuclear power projects.

"Those are the countries that pushed for Oil Deregulation Law during the

Stocks down 1.1%

From page B1

The composite index ended its positive territory for the third straight session Friday on banking fears after the big global meltdown earlier in the week triggered by growing fears of a US recession.

"We're trying to limit our losses and from a solid base at around 3,200 points—while awaiting for the Fed's and the Philippine central bank's decisions," said Mucogllava.

"Talk of a global economic slowdown rattling from a possible US recession is weighing on sentiment," said Jo Xiao Lim, an economist at UBS Bank.

"In the year to November 2007, the US accounted for almost 17 percent of the Philippines' exports, the largest single-country share. That only indicates the potential direct effect of a US recession," said Lim.

Dalisa Sinches Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) shed P2.25 or 1%, to P179. *AFP*

Advertisement

2008 PHILIPPINE ENERGY SUMMIT

Messages

MALACAÑANG PALACE
MANILA

We were pursuing to all participants to the Energy Summit 2008 and congratulations to the Department of Energy for taking the lead in this effort.

Philippine and stable supply of energy is essential to national progress, fueling our economy forward. In 2007, our economy grew at an incredible rate, and to sustain our gains, we need to match the demands of growth and address the issues concerning our energy sector, especially the problems brought about by the rising price of oil in the global market.

Government has undertaken different measures to meet our energy requirements, such as putting certain power assets like PSALM, on the market, going to Japan to push the Energy projects, calling for amendments to the EPIRA to realize open access, and promoting geothermal energy through the GeA program. Local Governments, on the other hand, have done their own projects like the Marikina Hydro-Power Plant, powered by methane from Metro Manila's garbage and the operations of solar power plants nationwide.

While these measures may be in place, we still need to double our efforts to achieve our target of 60-percent self-sufficiency in three years time, apart from addressing global environmental issues, like climate change, global warming, and air pollution. In light of these concerns, we need to further explore possible alternatives, like biofuels, geothermal, wind, solar and other sources of alternative and renewable energy, even as we tackle issues like energy conservation and efficient energy utilization.

To different stakeholders gather in this threefold summit, I trust that the insights and ideas that arise will further input into policies that will provide long term solutions to our energy problems, and, finally, set down of a strong and energy independent Republic.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Philippine Energy Summit

The time was a conventional crude oil prices when gripped us at the start of the past few decades' turbulent inactions from various sectors. These range from transport groups demanding a cut in fuel taxes to economic planners worrying if our nation's general economic can be sustained from consumers' burning ever-rising fuel costs or exports's sinking fuels that they are having their competitiveness in the market.

Anticipating the impact of continued high oil prices on economic growth, industrial sectors and ordinary citizens, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has called for an Energy summit. This gathering brings all stakeholders together to thresh out the issues and to reach consensus on short-, medium- and long-term responses in terms of policies, laws and action plans.

The DOE-Energy Summit has been organized around the theme, "$100 per Barrel: Crisis or Opportunity?" While a high oil price regime may trigger a crisis in the short term, it also forces us to rethink our plans in the pursuit of energy security and sustainable development – with a view to accelerating ways by which we reduce our dependency on imported fossil fuels.

The road require a whole slew of strategic interventions in the management of energy supply and demand. Evidently, this is not something that we as the Department of Energy can do alone. We recall how the cooperation of all stakeholders in thrashing through the issues and by fashioning creative solutions. That is why the Energy Summit has been structured both as a learning post, where vulnerable sectors can air their concerns and suggestions, and as a venue for collaborative problem-solving.

It is our hope that the Energy Summit will usher in a new era of constructive engagement among national agencies, the private sector, civil society, local government units and communities in addressing our energy concerns. The issues that confront us are far too weighty and complex to be addressed through a grand gathering of stakeholders. What really matters is our resolve to follow through our agreements and commitments at the end of the Energy Summit. It is in this spirit of commitment that we express our confidence we do share hopes to thank – not just to airing problems but also in finding solutions.

Strong oh, may for a secure energy future for the Philippines it is our collective hand.

Energy Summit addresses high oil prices

A four-day 2008 Philippine Energy Summit to address the impact of high oil prices on the economic growth opens today, January 29, at the SMX Convention Center of the Mall of Asia complex in Pasay City. The Energy Summit – on the theme "$100 per Barrel: Crisis or Opportunity?" – is expected to thresh out issues and concerns in anticipation of continued oil price hikes in the world market and come up with responses in terms of policies, laws and action plans to solve the problems.

The Department of Energy will lead five international program partners and 14 government agencies in identifying the problems and coming up with alternatives and solutions to address them.

Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes will deliver the opening remarks at 9:30 a. m. on January 29.

Congressman Miguel M. Arroyo, chairman of the House Committee on Energy, will speak on the Perspective from the House of Representatives at 9:10 a. m., January 30, while Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago will talk on the Perspective from the Senate at 9 a. m., January 31.

The program partners are Asian Development Bank, Japanese International Cooperation Agency, United Nations Development Program, United States Agency for International Development, and World Bank.

The collaborating government agencies are departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources, Education, Interior and Local Government, Finance, Labor and Employment, Science and Technology, Transportation and Communications, Trade and Industry, Commission on Higher Education, National Economic and Development Authority, and Metro Manila Development Authority.

The schedule of events is divided into Perspective Setting and Stakeholder's Concern, January 29; Presenting Issues and Options, and Workshops, January 30 – 31.

The Energy Summit has the following objectives:

- To promote the President's current Strategic Directions for the Energy Sector in the immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term.
- To listen and hear out the varying perspectives, issues and concerns both respect to oil price spike and its impact on the economy particularly the vulnerable sectors.
- To address the problem and arrive at consensus on the set of recommendations and action plans covering the immediate, short-, medium- and long-terms.

Expected outputs are:

1. Immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term national and multi-agency response involving policies, programs, and legislations.
2. Social mobilization in the action plan implementation.
3. Institutionalization of monitoring mechanisms.

Oil and gas prospects bright

Following the Supreme Court decision in 2004 upholding the constitutionality of the Mining Act, the Department of Energy sees the influx of investments in petroleum exploration.

At the end of 2006 alone, DOE awarded at least 20 service contracts for oil and gas exploration, which translated to a total of about $270 million in financial investment commitment to work programs.

However, it was the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project that put the Philippines on the map. The project represented the largest and most significant industrial investment in the history of the Philippines. It opened the way for the birth of the country's natural gas industry, providing 2,700MW of power to Luzon for 20 years (starting January 2001).

The Malampaya natural gas projects more 20 percent of the country's power generation requirements. It is being operated by Shell Philippines Exploration B.V. (SPEX) together with joint venture partners Chevron Texaco Malampaya LLC and PNOC-Exploration Corp.

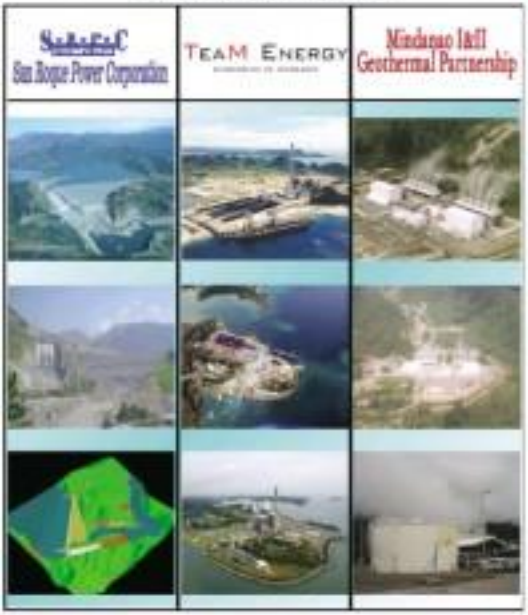
With the Malampaya success, investors from the oil and gas sectors scrambled to find a "next Malampaya" especially as oil prices soared to $60-to-$100 per barrel.

According to Master Advisory Partners, Inc., an energy advisory firm, six exploration wells are expected to be drilled by oil and gas exploration firms this year with investments estimated at $110-to-$ion.

DOE officials believe that there is continuing interest in the oil and gas sector, especially since the government is preparing for its next petroleum concessing round, hopefully this year.

First Gen

Congratulations to President Arroyo and Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes on the 2006 Philippine Energy Summit



The Marubeni Energy Companies in the Philippines:
San Roque 345 MW
Mindanao Geothermal - 100 MW
Team Energy - 2300 MW

Marubeni CORPORATION

Biofuels: *An industry begins to grow*

As consumers suffered from oil price shocks in recent years and as global awareness on the need to protect the environment grew, the government pushed for the creation of the Alternative Fuels Program that focused on reducing the country's dependence on oil imported from the Middle East.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo leads the opening prayers with Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes (right) and Rep. Mikey Arroyo, Chairman of the House Committee on Energy, before the discussions on the issues of energy program implementation to spur economic progress.

The program is one of the five key components of President Arroyo's Energy Independence Agenda to achieve 60 percent energy self-sufficiency by 2010.

The program has four major subprograms: Bio-diesel (coco-methyl ester and jatrophca), Bio-ethanol, Natural Gas Vehicle Program for Public Transport (NGVPPT) and Autogas or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for the transport sector.

The DOE also pushed for the use of hybrid, fuel cell, hydrogen and electric vehicles to complement the alternative fuels program.

While alternative fuels has been around for many years, DOE said the country's lawmakers felt it was time to shift to high gear as oil prices were up to unprecedented levels.

Congress passed Republic Act No. 9367 or the Biofuels Act of 2006 which became effective in May 2007. The law required oil companies to sell auto fuel containing one percent bio-diesel upon implementation of the law, and increase the mix to two percent in 2008. The law also mandates a five percent bio-ethanol blend with gasoline by 2009.

The Biofuels Law required the creation of the National Biofuels Board to implement and monitor the government's alternative fuels program. The agency is empowered to ensure the supply and quality of biofuels, and to recommend any increase in the volume of biofuels to be blended with gasoline and diesel.

Members of the board are the secretaries of Finance, Trade, Agriculture, Labor , Science and Technology and the administrators

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Biofuels: *An industry*

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of the Sugar Regulatory Administration and the Philippine Coconut Authority.

Bio-diesel

Bio-diesel is a renewable and biodegradable fuel extracted from plant oils. It can be used in diesel-fed automobiles (its lower blends with diesel fuel) without any need to modify the engines.

The country's bio-diesel program is focused on coco-methyl ester (CME) and jatropha curcas or "tuba-tuba," a non-edible plant that grows mostly in tropical countries like the Philippines.

Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes presides over a meeting on the forthcoming Energy Summit

While it initially received resistance, biodiesel is now a widely accepted alternative fuel, thanks to the Biofuels Law and the rising global awareness on climate change.

A two-percent biodiesel blend (B2) by next year will mean 126.4 million liters of CME will be sourced locally to improve countryside economy.

When purchasing CME, the Energy department advises consumers to buy only those products with a Certificate of Fuel Additive Registration (CFAR) and Certificate of Accreditation to Manufacture (CAM) issued by the DOE, to ensure the product abides by quality standards. The Philippines' home the biggest bio-diesel manufacturing facility in Asia owned by Chemrez Technologies Inc.

Jatropha alternative

To address concerns on food versus fuel and ensure the sustainability of the bio-diesel program, government is also pushing for the development of jatropha as feedstock for bio-diesel.

The PNOC Alternative Fuels Corp. was given the mandate to explore, develop and accelerate the utilization and commercialization of alternative fuels in the country.

An potential source of bio-diesel, the jatropha plant can produce an oil content of 30 to 38 percent. Its seeds yield an annual equivalent of 0.75 to 2 tons of bio-diesel per hectare.

PNOC-AFC will start the first phase of the construction of seed collection centers, crude jatropha oil expelling facilities, and a biodiesel refinery this year.

These seed collection centers will be constructed to serve as warehouse and storage facilities as well as quality control facilities for oil content testing for the harvested jatropha seeds.

These will be in parts of Luzon and Southern Philippines, where three units of oil expellers will also be constructed. The biodiesel refinery to process jatropha will be pursued in the latter part of the year.

Ethanol

Another sub-program of the alternative fuels industry is ethanol, a light alcohol which can be produced by fermenting carbohydrates, such as starch or sugar.

Ethanol produced using this process is sometimes called bio-ethanol, to distinguish it from ethanol derived from other raw

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We wish you health, happiness, prosperity and a brighter year ahead.

Kung Hei Fat Choi from

Wholesale Electricity Spot Market

The Power to Make a Brighter Future.

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Biofuels: *An industry...* *from p. B-7*

Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes leads officials of attached agencies in discussing our problems in the implementation of energy-related programs.

materials such as petroleum.

It is widely used in Brazil, US, China, India and Thailand. Other sources of bio-ethanol include corn, sugar, cassava, sweet sorghum, molasses, potatoes, cellulosic materials, etc.

Studies show that bio-ethanol, at 10 percent blend or less could be used without modifying vehicle engines. E10 or 10 percent ethanol blended with 90 percent gasoline was launched late last year.

Ethanol, however, is still being imported from largely Brazil.

Natural gas

The government has put in place the Natural Gas Vehicle Program for Public Transport (NGVPPT) to secure the country's energy supply by increasing the number of sources of transport fuel, particularly with the use indigenous natural gas.

Natural gas is naturally occurring gaseous petroleum that accumulates under the earth's crust.

There are two forms of natural gas being used as transport fuel:

compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

DOE is promoting the use of CNG in the transport sector since it is indigenous and cheaper than LNG, which still has to be imported.

It signed an agreement with the Shell Group for a pilot CNG program.

Shell's modern and daughter CNG station in Batangas is now up and running to serve the CNG requirements of up to 200 buses.

Meanwhile, DOE is also promoting liquefied petroleum gas or autogas as an alternative transport fuel. Autogas is considered cleaner than conventional automotive fuels.

Although LPG is an imported fuel, it helps diversify sources of transport fuel and take advantage of the cheaper supply of imported LPG.

Gasoline-fuel automobile and 4-stroke motorcycle engines can be converted into autogas. Conversion kits are available for as low as P25,000 upfront.

Autogas is considered safe and non-toxic. Leaks can be detected because an odorant is added to the fuel as a safety measure. Its fuel line systems are fitted with safety devices and shut-off valves that function automatically when the fuel line ruptures.

Petron Corp. is the leading autogas seller in the country today.

SPC Power Corporation
(Formerly Salcon Power Corporation)

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2008 PHILIPPINE ENERGY SUMMIT

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You may not realize it, but we do more than just generate electricity. For instance, we protect and reforest 11 watershed reservation areas throughout the country. We help put up streetlights and schoolbuildings, and we build roads and bridges. We also light up fan-flung islands and elevate interior barangays. We give you a 30-centavo per kilowatt-hour rate reduction each month, as mandated by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act. We help rural communities start their own livelihood projects. We bring them medical supplies and construct health centers for them. And we do all of these out of a deep sense of commitment to you. Because we don't just power your homes and the industries that fuel our economy.

WE EMPOWER YOU.

2008 Philippine Energy Summit

SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia
January 29, 30, 31 & February 5, 2008

January 29, 2008
Prospective Selling and Stakeholder's Concerns

7:30 – 9:00 am Registration
9:00 – 9:45 am Opening and Welcome Address – DOE Troops
9:45 – 9:50 am Opening Remarks
HON. ANGELO T. REYES Secretary, Department of Energy
9:50-12:30 pm **Plenary Session 1: The Impact of Current Oil Price Trends**
A. Global and Regional Perspective
Mr. Thomas Connelly, Deputy Assistant Director, IEM
Mr. Ashok Sarathi, Senior Energy Specialist, ADB
Dr. Noriaki Shikata, Economic Affairs Officer, Energy Unit, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP
B. Philippine Perspective
D. Carmelita N. Pantangco, D. Chairman
Institute for Development and Econometric Analysis (IDEA), Inc.
Discussants:
Mr. Sergio Ortiz-Luis, President, Canadian Confederation, Inc.
Mr. Emmanuel De Dios, Dean, UP School of Economics
Dr. Ramon H. Aseron, CEO, College of Business Administration
Mr. Emil Jurado, Executive Director, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines, World Bank
Sr. Jose Ramon T. Villarin, SJ, President, Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan
Plenary Session 2: Stakeholder's Concerns
A. Oil Industry
Mr. Edgar O. Chua, Country Chairman, Philippine Shell Petroleum Corp.
Discussants:
Atty. Bienvenido V. Abaya, President, PIATC
Mr. Oliver C. Lim, Chairman, Caltex (Philippines), Inc.
Mr. Saffrey D. Tangal, Jr., Chairman of the Board, Pilipinas Shell
Mr. Randy Reyes, Secretary General, Magnolia Marketing Alliance

1:30-5:00 pm **B. Consumer Sector**
Mr. Ward T. Lawrence, Chairman
Economist & Oil Price Watch
Discussants:
Hon. Raymond C. Oliveros, CESO, Presidential Assistant for the Cebu Area
Rev. Domingo Panganiban, Lead Convener, NAPE
Mr. Deborah Aguirre, Consultant, Japan Int'l. Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Mr. Raymond S. Mendoza, President, Energy Practitioners Assn. of the Phils.
C. Industry/Export Sector
Mr. Maximo Cuebo, Technician of Philippine Industries
Discussants:
Hon. Lito P. de Leon, Director General, PEZA
Cmte. Estrella Obligacion, Executive Director, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority
Mr. Ana Maria Zubiritu, Sr. Vice Director, Phil Exports Marketing Assn.
Mr. Harold G. Vinluan, President, World Wide Fund for Nature – Phils.
D. Transport Sector
Hon. Tiger Mandreza, Director, United Transport Koalisyon (UTAK)
Discussants:
Cmte. Estrella Cortes, JAFCC
Mr. Robert C. Nicholson, General Manager, MMRA
Mr. Fernando L. Martinez, President, Eastern Shuttle Corp.
Atty. Angela Consuelo Diaz, Program Coordinator, Kilos
E. Labor Sector
Hon. Crispin Beltran, Partylist Representative, Anakpawis
Discussants:
Ambassador Oswald D. Clay, Chairman, PCCI
Asec. Ma. Carina Soriano, Dept. of Labor and Employment
Mr. Ferdinand R. Exiss, President, Courage

January 30, 2008
Financing Issues and Options – Part One

7:30 – 9:00 am Registration
9:00 – 9:40 am Emerging and Traditional Sources – Trend Issues
9:40 – 9:50 am Synthesis Remarks of Day 1 and Presentation of Program for Day 2
9:50 – 9:55 am Presentation from the Senate of Recommendations 2008 Luzon & Implementation of Open Access
Hon. Miguel M. Zubiri, Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy
9:55 – 12:30 pm **Plenary Panel Discussion 1: The Imperative of Energy Security & Sustainable Development**
1. Oil, Gas and Coal: Which Way Forward?
Mr. Jacob G. Ang, Country Manager, International Finance Corp.
2. Renewable Energy: "Rays of the Future"
Mr. Jose Ma. Lorenzo P. Tan, Vice Chairman, World Wide Fund for Nature-Phils.
3. Solar Energy: The prospects for the Philippines?
Mr. Greg Arvidson, Managing Director, SunPower Philippines Mfg. Ltd.
4. Nuclear Energy: Time to revisit the option?
Mr. Jose G. Abuan, PhD, in Physics and Chemistry, NASA
5. Energy Choices: A closer image at the equation?
Dr. Ruben Reddick, Professor, Int'l. Inst. of Geological Sciences, UP

1:30 – 4:30 pm **WORKSHOPS – Part 1:** Interdependent sessions in separate breakout rooms)
Workshop 1: Accelerating Investments in Oil & Gas Exploration & Dev't.
Atty. Eduardo F. Hernandez, President, Philippine Association of Int. Petro. Landmen
Panel of Experts:
Ms. Rachel Montero Ongpin-Medel, Head, Investment Banking, Asia Pacific, Singapore
Mr. Patrick Tan, Country Representative to Vietnam, Exploration & Production, Singapore
Mr. Kelvin Low, Director, Malaysian Energy Corporation, LLC
Mr. Scott Watts, Asset Manager, Shell Phil. Exploration B.V.
Mr. Jeff Dawson, Chief Operating Officer, Eagle Drilling, LLC
Workshop 2: Promoting Renewable Energy: Regulatory Framework and Policy Direction
Ms. Catherine P. Montilla, Deputy Managing Director, EPIC, Inc.
Panel of Experts:
Dr. Natalio Dalangin, Jr., Consultant, USAID
Ms. Anthony James Marcos, Advisor, Chevron Geothermal Phils. Holdings
Mr. Larry Bracken, President, 34 GP & Chevron Manager, PNOC EDC
Mr. Ricardo L. Gonzalez, Jr., Vice President, Energy Development Corp.
Mr. Alfonso R. Tabujara, III, Consultant, Portland Energy Inc.
Workshop 3: Promoting Renewable Energy: Market & Financial Barriers
Mr. Marian Lazaro, Vice President, Northwind Power Development Corp.
Panel of Experts:
Mr. Reynaldo D. David, President, Development Bank of the Phils.
Ms. Ami Molina, President & CEO, Chemical Industries Association
Engr. Manuel V. Sumait, Energy Consultant on Alternative Fuels
Mr. Arlie Calalas, Team Leader, Philippine Biorefinery
Workshop 4: Promoting Renewable Energy: Technology Options
Dr. Reynaldo D. Del Mundo, Jr., Professor, Mapua Institute of Technology, Central Panel of Experts:
Mr. Celestino Simeon, President, Nasy Agricultural Dev't & Int'l Trade Corp.
Dr. Corazon Pili-Claudio, Chief, Philippine Coconut Authority
Mr. Angelito T. Asumbra, President, P&L Assn. of Renewable Energy Centers
Mr. Alfonso Serafico, President, Renewable Energy Association of the Phils.

January 31, 2008
Financing Issues and Options – Part Two

7:30 – 9:00 am Registration
8:45 – 9:00 Greetings and Technical Session – Day 3

8:00 – 5:15 Perspectives from the Senate
Hon. Miriam Defensor Santiago, Philippine Senate
9:15 – 9:35 Thematic Recap of Days 1 and 2 Presentations of Program for Day 3
9:35 – 11:30 pm **Plenary Panel Discussion 2 - Perspectives on Facing the Decades in Energy/Power Crisis**
1. Energy Conservation: Asian Experiences
Dr. Hiroaki Nagayama, Ph.D., Energy Science and Consultant, JICA
2. Fostering Competition in the Electric Power Industry
Dr. Yongzhi Chai, Principal Energy Specialist, Southeast Asia Department (SE)
3. Subsidized Oil Prices: Are They Sustainable?
Mr. Neil Atkinson, Senior Consultant, IEA - Energy Services, London
4. Impact of Energy Prices in the Agriculture Sector
Dir. Leonardo G. Montemayor, Director, Agriculture of Asia Century
5. Weighing the Tradeoff: Food vs. Fuel
Dr. Edwin J. Actis, Jr., Professor, Mapua Institute of Technology
6. Lighting Poor Communities: The Experience of ASEAN
Mr. Ivan Uy, Chief Technical Officer, ASEAN – Walmart International
7. Consumer Protection: Metering Energy Use
Hon. Jose Ponce Enrile, Philippine Senate
Moderator: Hon. Jose Ponce Enrile, Philippine Senate
1. Scaling up Rural Energy Projects: Access Issues through Social Mobilization
a. Mobilizing Communities around Responsible Use of Energy
Ms. Gilda Alcantara, Consultant, Mother Earth, Philippines
b. Energy Shortage: The Case of Mindanao
Asec. Christopher de la Cruz, Executive, Philippine Energy Regulatory Commission
2. Institutionalizing a Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation of Proposed Interventions
Dr. Antonio O.D. Lu Tiko, Dean, Ateneo School of Government

1:30 – 5:00 WORKSHOPS – Part 2 (interdependent sessions in separate breakout rooms)
Workshop 5: Promoting Energy Efficiency & Conservation in the Phils.
Dr. Benjamin Austria, Exec. Director, Energy Development & Utilization Task Force, DOE
Panel of Experts:
Dr. Emmanuel Lantayan, Acting Director, Prof'l. Bldg. Cont. Svcs. Office, DPWH
Mr. Jesus C. Mendoza, Director, Bureau of Product Standards
Mr. Reynaldo Capalla, President, Energy and Industry Support Group
Ms. Leticia Ann Cruz, Managing Director, Ecosphere Technologies, Inc.
Mr. Lester Marcelo, President, SEDAM
Workshop 6: Lowering Power Rates via Industry Competitiveness and Consumer Welfare
Dr. Fernando C. Rivera, Faculty, ADS
Panel of Experts:
Prof. Rodolfo D. Albaña, Jr., Chairman, Energy Regulatory Commission
Hon. Lilia B. de Lima, Director General, PCGG
Mr. Cyril del Callar, President, SPH
Mr. Jose C. Ibazeta, President and CEO, PSALM
Mr. Cesar A. Hernandez, President, Philippine Transmitter Model Corp.
Ms. Melinda L. Quintos, Former COMELEC Commissioner
Mr. Jesus Francisco, President, Akrotech
Dr. Arthur John Tuang Jr., Chairman, Semirara Mining & Power Corporation
Mr. Arthur Aguilar, President, ENAGENCO
Mr. Eddy Hasan, Administrator, SECI

Workshop 7: Responding to High Oil Prices
Mr. Carlos Abadesco, Chairman, Independent Oil Retailers Assn. of the Phils.
Panel of Experts:
Hon. Eduardo T. Gonzalez, Governor, Province of Bataan
Cmte. Celia Bolinao, Mun. of Orion
Ms. Anne Bibiloni-Sison, Principal & Managing Director, Total Phils. Corp.
Mr. Peter Lee G. Ibasi, School of Economics, UAP
Mr. Jun Enrique Africa, Research Head, IBON Foundation
Jay Glen de Leon, President, Alliance of Concerned Transport Organizations

Workshop 8: Alternative Fuels: Issues and Concerns
Mr. Alexander Po Lorenzo, Trustee, PEAT-AB Foundation
Panel of Experts:
Ms. Susan C. Ortiz, VP, Technological Univ'ty of the Phils.
Mr. Rodel T. Dy, Managing Director, Asian Institute of Petroleum Studies, Inc.
Mr. Patrick B. Lucio, Consultant, El Paso Industrial Services Corp.
Ms. Cherlie D. Ortiz, Vice President, Food Group Phils.
Ms. Elizabeth B. Lee, President, LAMP

Workshop 9: Scaling up Rural Energy Projects: Access Issues through Social Mobilization
Ms. Annet Bocaletto, Consultant
Panel of Experts:
Fr. Edilberto dela Cruz, Consultant, PEO
Dr. Antonio C. Quibuyen, Consultant, Island Wide, Inc.
Mr. Rafael O. Aunga, Asia Pacific Energy Policy Officer, WWF
Ms. Jose P. Levina, Jr., Chairman, Samar Development Auth'ority
Ms. Myrna V. Yap, Team Assist Assoc. Foundation

Workshop 10: Scaling Success Indicators and Mechanics for Monitoring Cross Sectoral Interventions
Dr. Segundo E. Romero, Faculty Member, UP School of Public & Dev't. Mgmt.
Panel of Experts:
Asst. Comm'r M. Bernardo, Chair, Presidential Management Staff
Cmte. Antonio Rosadino, Bur. of Marine and Coast Guard Affairs
Ms. Ma. Josefa Jimenez, National Bio-Tech Board
Dr. Alex D. Dichoso, Jr., Dean, UP NCPAG
Prof. Rafael S. Subiyanto, Professor, UP College of Business Administration
Mr. Rene de Borde, National Coordinator, Citizen's Disaster Response Center

February 1, 2008
9:00 am – 12 pm Final Plenary Session
Presentation of Summit Report to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

The Department of Energy would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance and support of the following organizations:
Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) Implementing Agencies: National Power Corporation, Transco, National Electrification Administration, Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation, Philippine National Oil Company
Collaborating Agencies: DA, DAR, DepEd, DOST, DILG, DTI, NEDA, PNR, DOE ZBM, DOLE, DPWH, DOTC, MMDA
International Partners: Asian Development Bank, World Bank, UNDP, USAID, JICA
Private Sector and Civil Society Networks: Green Army Foundation, Renewable Energy Coalition, Philippine Green Building Council, League of Corporate Foundations, World Wide Fund for Nature - Philippines

Congratulations
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on the

2008 Philippine Energy Summit
January 29, 30, 31 & February 5, 2008

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Stimulus package seen vital in shoring up US economy

PAULSON

WASHINGTON — WEEKS AFTER PRESIDENT George W. Bush and other politicians, especially to an election year with the White House up for grabs.

Bush and House leaders reached a deal to reveal time last week that would provide $150 billion in economic stimulus through tax rebates that will go to 117 million families and temporary tax breaks for businesses.

Bush's chief negotiator on an economic aid deal on Tuesday said the Senate should quickly get behind the plan or risk thwarting the resentment of a frustrated public.

"I don't think the Senate is going to want to derail that deal," Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said. "And I don't think the American people are going to have much patience for anything that would slow down the process."

The House is making the proposal to a vote this week and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said he hopes to have the package approved by the Senate and on the president's desk by Feb. 11.

While the plans would fall short to destroy by Senate Democrats to add support for unemployment benefits and food stamps — items that got left out of the House version — the administration is stressing the need for speed given the recent economic data.

The Federal Reserve, alarmed by a global sell-off of stocks, cut a key interest rate by the largest amount in more than two decades in an emergency move last week and would cut rates again when the Fed holds a regularly scheduled meeting this week.

Concerns have mounted with a cascade of bad news on the economy, from multibillion-dollar losses at some of the nation's biggest banks and investment houses to soaring mortgage defaults and a continued plunge in housing.

Many economists believe the stimulus package contains the right mix of fast-acting relief that will have an impact, if not to averting a recession.

AP

Oil drops below $90 as equity markets dip

SINGAPORE — OIL PRICES dropped as Wall Street's fall at the end of last week and a decline in Asian markets Monday prompted traders to sell crude for new contracts.

"The momentum in the equity markets reflects the sentiment on the US economy and how other economies in the world may be affected ... if it slides into a deep recession," said Victor Shum, an energy analyst with Purvin & Gertz in Singapore.

Light, sweet crude for March delivery lost $1 cents to US$90.60 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange by late afternoon in Singapore.

Ideas said oil futures were supported by expectations that the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries will not increase its production levels when it meets Friday in Vienna, Austria.

The oil cartel has been coming under increasing pressure in recent weeks from the United States, the world's biggest oil consumer, to raise its output to meet growing demand and help ease high oil prices.

Opec officials have repeatedly asserted that high crude oil prices are largely the result of market speculators and geopolitical factors, not fundamental supply-concerns, and are best beyond its control.

The crude contract rose US$2.30 on Friday to settle at US$91.71 a barrel on a day that the recession worries that pulled prices lower in recent weeks may have been overdone.

Energy investors were heartened by recent moves by the US Federal Reserve and a proposed economic package to shore up the US economy.

While investors believe the government's US$150 billion stimulus proposal and the 4x% rate cut will stave off a serious economic downturn, rate cuts also tend to weaken the dollar, giving investors another reason to buy oil futures.

Crude futures offer a hedge against a falling dollar, and oil futures bought and sold in dollars are more attractive to foreign investors when the greenback is falling.

Heating oil futures fell 1.85 cents to US$2.501 a gallon (US 6 litres), while gasoline futures declined 1.42 cents to US$2.3004 a gallon.

Natural gas futures lost 2.2 cents to US$7.982 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Brent crude fell 66 cents to US$90.24 a barrel on the ICE Futures exchange in London. AP

Asian stocks slide as global rally fades

A LOCAL investor grimaces at the close of the Taiwan Stock Exchange in a Taipei brokerage. The benchmark index plunged 3.28 percent Monday, weighed down by China concept and non-tech stocks on cue from regional bourses.

Regional markets sink deep into the red due to losses on Wall Street

TOKYO — ASIAN SHARE PRICES PLUMMETED Monday as a global stock market rally fizzled out amid renewed pessimism about the US economic outlook and a plunge in Chinese stocks, dealers said.

They said investors fled to safe havens, such as bonds and gold, as markets around the region slumped deep in the red to the wake of losses on Wall Street, with Shanghai plunging by almost 7.2 percent.

Hong Kong was down almost 6.0 percent in afternoon trade and Singapore tumbled by about 5.0 percent. Tokyo ended down nearly 4.0 percent as listed lost 3.8% percent. Indian shares plunged almost 6.8 percent in morning deals.

In Europe, investors are bracing for another solid rise when trading resumes.

Institutions remained fragile in the wake of last week's roller coaster performance that saw global shares slump on fears of a US recession before rebounding sharply following a hefty US interest rate cut and an economic stimulus plan.

"The market is fluctuating wildly," said Francis Lun, general manager at Fullright Securities in Hong Kong. "Investors don't have the appetite to buy stocks now."

Chinese share prices were hit by worries about the US economy and severe valuation overshoot at home.

After last week's emergency US interest rate cut, many investors are hoping that the Federal Reserve will deliver another dose of monetary medicine at the end of a two-day meeting on Wednesday.

The fear is that stocks could resume their decline if the Fed fails to deliver the quarter-point reduction many traders are betting on.

Market players are also related about whether the central bank's efforts will be enough to prevent the US economy from slipping into recession.

"If the Fed makes another rate cut, the market will be likely to take the decision positively," said Hirohito Ryusaki, investment strategy analyst for Tokyo-based Mizuho Securities. "But the market may turn bearish, as there are expectations that for the coming days may evolve concerns about the US economy."

"The volatile market is expected to persist until the big economic events are played out," said Mitsutoshi Shiina, chief fund manager at Ichiyoshi Management in Tokyo. "But the market may start to lift in the process of establishing a near term bottom."

In New York, the blue-chip Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 1.38 percent Friday to close at 12,337.37, capping a tumultuous week. AFP

China power crisis not caused by pricing, says gov't official

BEIJING — CHINA'S WORST power supply crisis in years has been caused by a coal shortage rather than Beijing's cap on electricity tariffs, a government official said on Monday, highlighting Beijing's concern over inflation.

China is taking a series of emergency measures, including imposing a ban on coal exports and ordering railway operators to speed deliveries of coal to boost coal inventories, which are now below half the normal rate, or about a week's supply.

Zhu Hongren, deputy director of the economic cooperation bureau of the National Development & Reform Commission, said Beijing would create sufficient electricity-market conditions while slashing the amount that can be used by energy-guzzling and polluting industries.

Zhu said a shortage of coal was the key reason behind the power crisis, the worst in many years, that has led to brownouts in 17 Chinese provinces.

Zhu underscored the severity of the coal shortage at a news conference: "Bad weather hit coal transportation. Well-spenders in the south was severely affected by the severe downpour in December. Demand of small mines and persistently high coal demand due to rapid industrial expansion."

But he declined to link the crisis to Beijing's price cap on electricity prices, which has prevented power generators from passing on rising fuel costs. Traders and analysts say that squeeze has led some power generators to cut back output.

"The coal-power price link reform is to reflect the cost of resources and environment. The current coal shortage is not caused by this," said Zhu.

Beijing earlier this month ordered a freeze in the near-term prices of basic necessities, including oil and electricity, due to worries that decade-high inflation could worsen and harm the world's fourth-largest economy.

China last raised power tariffs in June 2006. Coal prices for 2008 contracts between miners and power firms have risen 30 percent over 2007, industry officials have said.

Citing the electricity regulator, Zhu said the country's total power shortage has amounted to 30.9 gigawatts (GW), with brownouts spreading to 17 provinces. Reuters

Yen surge said to create vicious circle for Japan

TOKYO — THE YEN'S SURGE to a three-year high against the dollar threatens to trap an already frail economy in a vicious circle, with the currency's sharp gains hitting local stocks and undermining the country's key exporters.

A strong yen is making life tricky for Japanese policymakers because it has almost nothing to do with the economy's own health, instead reflecting the fear gripping investors around the world about a painful US recession.

That fear and a flare up in market volatility prompted investors and speculators to unwind many trades — borrowing in yen to invest meager 0.5-percent short-term rates to buy high-yielding currencies, emerging markets stocks or commodities.

The yen's role as a funding currency of choice means, in turn, has tied its fortunes to the performance of such markets in Japan and abroad, even to expectations meant that the Bank of Japan may need to trim rates this year to help the economy.

Economists at Goldman Sachs said on Monday that Japan may have already fallen into a recession.

The yen's sensitivity to risks was highlighted on Monday when a 4-percent slide in the Nikkei share index ago boosted the Japanese currency and dragged the dollar down to near 106.00 yen.

The dollar touched a low of 104.95 yen last week, its weakest since May 2005, after the Federal Reserve's 75 basis point emergency rate cut late Tuesday spurred a brief recovery in stocks.

One reflection of the yen's tight links to equity markets is that yen's day-to-day moves in the past year have been almost a mirror image of Dow Nikkei.

In 2007 the yen climbed against the dollar 92 percent of the time the Nikkei fell, according to Reuters data. The past fall'ew, that correlation was just 28 percent.

If stocks sell off further, it could drive the yen to heights that will start to test the pain threshold of Japan's exporters.

The selling of exporter shares is why the Nikkei share average has been hit more hardest than US or European stocks, despite the limited exposure of Japanese banks and investors to the US subprime-mortgage crisis.

On Monday the dollar was down as much as 4.7 percent against the yen since close of the year, on track for its biggest one-month drop since August 2001, leaving exporters who had planned for a higher level.

A Reuters survey of Japan's manufacturers this month showed they expected the yen to near 100.50 to the dollar at the end of February. Reuters

Toyota beats GM in '07 production but loses in sales

TOKYO — TOYOTA MAY HAVE fallen short of General Motors in global vehicle sales last year, but it's beaten its US rival in another measure — global vehicle production.

In the latest neck-and-neck numbers race between the world's top two automakers, Toyota Motor Corp. said Monday it had made a record 9,407,754 vehicles worldwide in 2007, up 3.3 percent from the previous year. That's about 213,000 more cars and trucks than the 9.281 million that GM made last year.

Honda and other major Japanese automakers also reported strong annual output gains. Only Mazda said its production slipped.

Toyota's tactics, less precise production estimates for 2007 says 9.51 million. Toyota spokesperson Paul Nakazato in Tokyo said there was no special reason for the change from the estimate.

By sales, however, General Motors Corp. just barely retained its crown over Toyota, selling 9,369,324 vehicles around the world, up 2 percent from the previous year, and about 31,000 more than Toyota.

Toyota on Friday updated its sales tally for last year with additional three digits at 9,366,418. As another released last week, Toyota said it sold 9.366 million vehicles last year globally, up 6 percent from 2006 — allowing GM to keep its title of world's No. 1 automaker for the 77th year.

The two big competitors are vying for sales in the US, Europe and other established markets, as well as new markets, including India and China.

Toyota has been ranking up growth recently riding on its reputation for quality and good mileage. Soaring gas prices are making smaller cars than are Toyota's forte increasingly in demand. AP

Economy summit to put Europe's 'Big 4' to test

PARIS — STRUGGLING BANK SCANDAL, the leaders of Germany, Britain, France and Italy will meet in London today to discuss how to counter what they have the will and the wherewithal to keep the economy on the rails.

They are also expected to discuss global economic strategy ahead of a meeting of the G7 industrial powers, where the four confer with Japan, Canada and the United States and ensure they have no surprises what happens if there is US recession.

The summit, called by Britain's Gordon Brown a few weeks ago to discuss the global crunch, looked all the more necessary this week as world stock markets hemorrhaged and French bank Societe Generale announced the biggest rogue-trading loss in history.

The event risks proving bigger on words than deeds, however, given that serious differs with the other countries as the table on concerter steps to coordinate policing of financial markets at international level, government officials admit in private.

Brown laid out the stakes on Friday with a call for greater clarity in the international financial system to help restore confidence to the battered bank.

Beyond the lessons of the credit crunch per se, the prospect of the G7 meeting on Feb. 9 in Tokyo is unlikely to offer easier grounds for consensus at the London summit.

Given that the British pound has now joined the yen and the dollar in exchange rate decline against the euro, Germany could advise all France and Italy have even more reason to feel sour the tie to their superiors' price competitiveness.

"It'll be hard to talk exchange rates with Britain in the room," an official from one of the countries concerned said, speaking on strict condition of anonymity.

The credit market crunch that central banks have been trying to sort out for six months started as a debt-default crisis in the US subprime, or high-risk, mortgage lending business as the US housing market itself turned from boom to bust.

It blew into something much bigger when banks and others in the financial markets panicked over their potential exposure via other investments where they had also done bad loans packed into entity.

Big banks have since announced over $75 billion in losses and write-downs. Central banks had to pump tens of billions of dollars in emergency loans into money markets to prevent the wheels of capitalist finance from rattling up.

Friends President Nicolas Sarkozy is at least as known to be sore to be doing something.

"I will be in London beside Gordon Brown and Angela Merkel to make a certain number of proposals which will ensure this transparency and the morality of financial capitalism," he said on Thursday. Reuters

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/ Citizenship	Position
SUBFONG CORPORATION MC-1 Pilipro North Ave., cor. CSEZ, Jawalan City	Kotaro Takenaka Japanese	Consultant
NAGOYA FOOD & TRAVEL CORP. Unit2 Cosmos Bldg. F. Ortiz St. cor. CSEZ, Subic, Pampanga	Kenny Ian Kam British	Marketing Manager
ASIA KANTO KOGYO CSEZ, INC. C-20 Jose Abad Santos Ave., Luzon Drive, CSEZ, Subic, Zambales	Kenta Osaka Japanese	Vice Manager
DAVIE RESIDENCE CORPORATION C-12 MC Gabriel Packing Center, Subic, CSEZ Luzon Drive, Barrio Kalaklan, Mc del Pilar, Subic Bay	Gabriel Ng Wei Canadian	Vice President
ASIA WORLDWIDE CONSULTING CORP. Unit F-10 Mariveles Trade Commercial Zone, Mariveles Bataan, Fwd. Appli-Marketing, Mariveles Bataan	Kyung Kyu Ko Jade & Pyeong Korean	Secretary Supervisor
C. LOTO & ASSOCIATES Mc-1 East Wing, 1647 Mabini St. Manila City	Mariano Primero Italian	Deputy Resident Manager
HOUSE CAN DO PHILIPPINES CORPORATION Tower 1 Pinnacle 2 Bldg. Corner Fl Bonifacio, Mandaluyong City	Hyo Lo Han Korean	Assistant Chief Manager
CAPITAL ECUMENICAL UNIVERSITY INCORPORATED N. Bagtas St., Tanauan, Batangas	Chaiwa Ann Korean	Instructor Head Coach
GFF PHILIPPINES, INC. GF Tektron 1 Bldg., Road 3, Laguna Techno Park, Binan City	Chi Ping Chang Taiwanese	General Manager
GOOD NEW TRAVEL AGENCY, INC. GF Bonten Bus Travel, Mahogani Road, Pasay City	Changsoo Lee Korean	Consultant
TELEPERFORMANCE, INC. GF Alphalan Bldg., Finlandia Ave., Filinvest Cyber City, Hayang Laya	Sonia Cecilia Fernandez Chilean	Quality Analyst

Those have any information/data/opinion to offer on the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with this Regional Director.

(Sgd.) ALEX A. AVENIDO
RD, Regional Director

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CREBA to induct new set of officers and directors

THE CHAMBER OF REAL ESTATE AND Builders' Associations, Inc. (CREBA, Inc.), the largest organization of the country's renowned real estate developers, will hold its annual induction of its new officers and board of directors on January 21, 2005, 6pm at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila.

Incoming CREBA president Regina M. Romero II and prominent past officers and board members including Pedro C. Tuviera (1997 National President of CREBA, Inc.) and Manuel M. Serrano (Founder and Chairman of the Board), will lead the and event, along with hundreds of CREBA members in witness the oath-taking and officially welcome the new set of directors and officers.

"CREBA has lined up innovative programs, activities and events which will mark another promising year for the organization. With the forthcoming induction of the new set of officers and board of directors, members can expect an even stronger, more and exciting organization with the primordial goal of elevating the real estate industry to greater heights," says Edicha L. Manansala, vice president for Public Affairs.

To be inducted are CREBA founder and chairman of the board Manuel M. Serrano; Regina M. Romero II, national president; Tonia P. Barrios, executive vice president; Ernesto C. Millan, treasurer; Michael O. Oh, corporate secretary; directors Rosemarie C. Bass, Orlando S. Benigno, Anne A. Coca, Franklin G. Fuentebella, Danilo E. Ignacio, Oscar D. Inocencio, Nestor S. Mangle, Jerry M. Navarrete, Emanuel E. Robles and Pedro C. Tante.

Also to be sworn in are vice presidents Antonio M. De Guzman, Financial Affairs; Avelino P. Avelo, Internal Affairs; Victor H. Benavidez, Finance; Angel G. Vivas, Jr., Chapter Affairs; Edilia L. Manansala, Public Affairs; Rodolfo L. Paz, Systems and Technology; Dominga D. De Leon, Auditor and Parliamentarian E. Dabila, Jr., Presidential Adviser.

Registration will start at 6pm, followed by a special dinner organized at the Grand Ballroom, MIDAS Channel Royal Peninsula will be welcoming the new set of officers and directors, and it also the guest of honor for the night.

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MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family of the late

Catalina M. La Rosa

would like to express our deepest appreciation to all of you, our relatives and friends, who gave generously of your time, as well as flowers, mass cards, gave donations, or in some other way expressed your love, concern and support in celebrating

Visiting is coming home to her Creator.

LA FUNERARIA PAZ., INC.

Atty. Geronimo D. Venales, Jr.	Chapel II	10 January 08 9:00 a.m.	Pius Cemetery
Elisa L. Magsalanan	Chapel I	10 January 08 9:00 a.m.	Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina
Eladio Lo Sai	Chapel I	10 January 08 9:00 a.m.	Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque

...and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2 Peter 1:11

VERONICA CABRERA MUÑOZCO

peacefully joined our Lord
on January 25, 2005 at the age of 18.

Her loving parents, **Benjamin & Angelita**; brothers, **Angelo & Michael**; sister, **Conapon**; nieces, **Hikee & Carlos**; cousins, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Mañosca Residence in Carsumbal, Cavite.

Interment will be tomorrow, January 26, 2005 at the San Agustin Memorial Park, Desmariñas, Cavite after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Immaculate Conception Church.

People, Events & Products

Save Wilcon, different place

WILCON BUILDERS' DEPOT AND SM PYLE'S 20-year tradition of customer satisfaction has now reached Pampanga. On Sat., 15, the Wilcon@ depot outlet – 18th in the chain of Wilcon stores – will hold a grand opening at its newest branch in Mexico, Pampanga (Brgy. Legaspi, Sapon Olongapo Road, Mexico Pampanga). Like the 14 Wilcon Depot and Supply that have been established nationwide, the Pampanga branch provides the same, distinct Wilcon brand of friendly service and the same-wide-ranging selection of high-quality construction materials. Long-familiar Wilcon power in one-stop convenience shopping, Wilcon offers its customers easy access to construction merchandise, which are sold, organized in the air-conditioned comfort of its shops and through its reliable delivery service. Wilcon Builders' Depot Pampanga is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, and can be reached at 840-1800, 2212.

CloseUp gives away 100 diamonds at Lovapalooza Frost Fest!

A SHOWER OF SPARKLING AWARDS WILL LIKELY completes at this years' Lovapalooza '05, the most awaited annual Valentine's Day event. Consumer toothcomes with icy cool kisses will receive a diamond-studded Crystal Frost necklace at the Lovapalooza '05 Frost Fest - the most-attend and coolest Valentine's bash of the year, glowing by vendors, homecrowds and party-pirates. You too can join this exclusive and glitzy Heart's Day celebration. Just send a photo of you and your honey kissed icy cool kiss to Close-up@hotmail.com.ph or to 150 Pasig Blvd., Pasig City. 100 lucky couples will be chosen to get to attend the exclusive Lovapalooza Frost Fest Party and will be given the best Valentine's gift: a diamond-studded Crystal Frost necklace! Closeup Lovapalooza Frost Fest will be the ultimate Valentine event - featuring ice bars, ever flowing drinks and cool entertainment for a night of love and partying only for couples with an ice attitude! Closeup will also continue its tradition in the Philippines since 2000, has brought couples together with a kiss. This year, Closeup Lovapalooza brings out fresher and cooler kisses with Closeup's new Crystal Frost variant. It has crystal frost guarantee that sparkles as it releases icy cool freshness, giving you icy cool kisses! Join Closeup Lovapalooza '05 now and get a chance to win one of 100 diamonds and be one of the first to experience icy cool kisses! Deadline of submission of entries is until Feb. 5. Kiss at icy-cool Valentines!

Edupalz '06 to be held at AU, Feb. 6

THE "GRATE INTER-UNIVERSITY GLEE FEST ON EDUcation, dubbed as "Edupalz '06," promises to be an exciting tournament of trusty education students of the various colleges and universities in Metro Manila. The contest will be held on Feb. 6 at Angeles University Foundation in Legarda, Manila. The competition is open to participants from colleges of education in the Metro Manila area or NCR. Each participating college may send 10 students as contestants. All participants are invited to at Southern University Legarda campus at 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The contestants will compete with each other in a 30-item, 25-minute written test under strict supervision. The test will consist of questions on professional education subjects. Trophies and medals are at stake in the competition which is divided into two categories: Individual Category and Group Category. The top three scores of the contestants in the Individual Category will be awarded gold, silver and bronze medals, respectively. The top three scorers among the school teams shall declared winners in the Group Category, and they will be awarded likewise with trophies and medals. Awarding ceremonies to be held at 10 a.m. at the open-stage at the Little Theater of Angeles University. Deadline for submission of the lists of contestants is Jan. 30. No registration fees. Registration forms may be faxed to the Edupalz '06 Secretariat at telefax 735-3216 and 736-3684 or sent by e-mail to the address: edupalz@yahoogroups.com.ph.

6th Animazing Shorts for e-Services

CALLING ON ALL FILIPINO ANIMATORS TO SUBMIT their entries to the 6th Animazing Shorts of the e-Services (Glens) and the Animation Council of the Philippines. Animazing Shorts will be held on Feb. 11-12, at the SMX Convention Center. 6th Animazing Shorts aims to showcase original animation privileged animation. The competition is composed of a professional and amateur (student) categories. Entries must be made frame by frame, whether 2D and 3D animations including computer graphics animation and must be submitted to the DVD format for pre-selection. They must also be submitted together with photo stills from the work, 1 photo of the animator/director, and brief biography of the animation director (not more than 5 sentences). All entries will undergo a preliminary screening and the finalists will compete and be shown during the ceremonies. Glens at Incurring Conference & Exhibition in February. Animators of shows entries and their work will also be featured in all your no-materials for the event. Application forms and mechanics to the competition can be downloaded from the ACP1 website, www.animation-council.org. Screening of Finalists will be on February 11, 10:00 AM to 5 PM at the Small Cinema of the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia. Viewer's Choice Awards will be given on the second day of the L-Session. Exciting Prizes await the winners. Deadline for submission of entries is on Jan. 31, 6 p.m. and must be sent to: Animation Council of the Philippines (ac Mapúa), Treasure Business Center, 1018 Cayco Cruz Bldg., Escolta City Cybergate, E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Quezon City. For more information regarding the competition, call 436-2000 to 09 ext. 1107/131.

Tutuban Mall's January Inventory Sale:

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT OPPORTUNITY FOR shopping binges expired with the end of the holidays, you'll discover it hasn't! It's your second chance on some items during this feverish holiday rush. Tutuban Mall provides another spree of surprises as it unveils its "Inventory Sale." Take advantage of the multitude sales which will run from Jan. 31 to Feb. 3. From the latest fashion trends to gadgets and home decors, the choices are limitless with over two thousand mall shops to choose from. Tutuban Mall is the place to go for the best buys at latest prices in Divisoria. If saving is top priority, then Tutuban Mall is the place for you to shop. So hurry and visit Tutuban Mall today.

Bits & Clips

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DRINK RESPONSIBLY

LIFESTYLE

Editor Cinchi Bunal-Formoso

The whole truth about breakfast

Experts debunk myth that skipping the first meal of the day aids weight loss

By Linda B. Bolido

AS THE TERM SUGGESTS, breakfast is supposed to break a fast. After all, unless someone is sleepwalking, he/she does not take anything while asleep.

Surprisingly, Filipinos, who seem to spend their waking hours munching on something, do not jump out of bed when they wake up as all that time when they did not put anything in their stomachs.

What they sleep for the recommended eight hours or injection of short time. Filipinos still have to be reminded to eat the day with a good, filling and nutritious meal.

The usual excuse is the constraints of life in the modern world. Jeers: Who have for a leisurely breakfast.

Adults have to rush off to work or other activities while children have to reach the school bus or, those in public schools, have to start early so two other classes can use their rooms.

Inevitably, experts point out that the meal they are skipping is not only the one they need most to cope with the day's work challenges and opportunities.

Like fuel to vehicles and machines, a good morning meal energizes, makes the body parts perform the way they should, awakens the mind for the work it has to do and generally just keeps a person alert throughout the day.

Children, in particular, need all the nutrients of a hearty breakfast in they to cope with the mental, physical, and psychological demands of school work and other activities.

At a recent symposium on "Scoring the Goals for a Healthy Child" organized by Nestlé, Dr. Jesus Z. Gabriel Tan pointed out that breakfast replenished blood glucose levels after an overnight fast.

Good start

As Cebu Archbishop, a nutritious breakfast gave the day a good start as it improved academic performance and psychosocial functions.

Gabriel Tan, former health secretary and now professor in the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, said breakfast made students more alert and improved their memory, among others.

A full stomach improved their mood and their relationship with their classmates.

On the long-term, breakfast improved overall nutrition. A healthy breakfast, Gabriel Tan said, provided about a third of a person's daily nutritional requirements.

MISSION: school children dance with Rufa Mae Quinto.

WHOLE GRAIN cereals are convenient and nutritious.

He said it was a misconception that skipping breakfast helped people lose weight.

On the contrary, he said breakfast "helps maintain a healthy weight and a normal body mass index."

He cited published studies that showed breakfast "relieved obesity risk, prevented stunting (arrest) better physical endurance," among others.

So important is having that first meal of the day that Gabriel Tan said, "Any breakfast is better than no breakfast at all."

But, of course, Fat Gabriel Tan and other symposium speakers, a nutritious breakfast should be the menu.

Nutritious isn't expensive

Madeleine Mayor Maria Lourdes Fernando said, in her city, they were promoting the eating of breakfast until 9:00 since that a necessary meal did not have to be expensive. Thus, they supported our campaign to family food to make it more convenient for people to get the nutrients they needed.

Dr. Trinidad Trinidad of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute-Department of Science and Technology underscored the benefits of foods that provided complex carbohydrates and had high fiber content like whole-grain cereals.

Among other things, such foods, she said, slowly released glucose into the blood helping improve memory and concentration. Two things schoolchildren, in particular, needed.

Milk drinks of Nestlé and General Mills said it was in recognition of the benefits of fiber and complex carbohydrates that the companies came up with their line of whole grain breakfast cereals.

Corazon V. Sagar of Nestlé's Wellness Desk said they wanted to empower consumers to make the right choice for well-being and health.

Nutritionist Brigid McKevith said whole grain cereals were not only nutritional-rich but also "convenient and tasty... appealing the value of the best meal of the day."

Nestlé has launched its Healthier Breakfast Campaign with Nestle Koko, as part of its Nutrition and Wellness program, stressing the nutritional activities of the campaign is Promoting Good Nutrition and Healthy Breakfast program will in Mindanao.

The company is also supporting the symposium to disseminate findings to promote the Department of Education.

During the symposium, parenting advocate Maricel Laxa-Pang Jimon stressed that, while more nutritious products were now in the market like Nestlé's whole grain line, it was important that parents set the right example to get children to develop the habit of eating breakfast.

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Health and beauty trivia

THIS IS JUST A LITANY OF OUR MIS-deeds but tidbits of information with our objective in mind—make you better informed so you are able to make wiser lifestyle choices.

Ignorance from ignorance will result in injustice (ability to celebrate life in terms of health, meaning, of course, one uses the knowledge gained to make the right choices.

The only one who can make the decision is you.

Ask Hugs Bacon

That mean sticky tablet was right after all. Cheese are good for the heart. They can prevent plaque from forming on artery walls, a condition known as atherosclerosis, that block blood flow, thus helping prevent heart attacks.

Try eating one large cheese daily. This gives you 11,000 i.u. (international unit) of vitamin A from betacarotene. And there is a bonus. Vitamin A is antioxidant. If you want a complexion more radiant complexion and overall great skin, consider this mighty vitamin.

For taste only

The amino acid arginine has been the subject of many studies, most especially in helping make erections stronger.

Called the natural Viagra, this amino acid is necessary for the normal functioning of the pituitary gland. Increasing the blood flow to the penis, it does not, however, have the same effect on everyone. For instance, effectiveness, 3-6 grams (3,000-6,000 mg) must be taken 45 minutes before sex.

Arginine can also enhance fertility in men, increasing the sperm count. As an immune booster as well, it stimulates the thymus gland to increase the number of T cells that aid in the body's defense against cancer.

Male and female gym enthusiasts/body builders can take two grams (2,000 mg) one hour before exercise. For maximal size/bust, 2,500 mg closer to the bedtime before going to bed. By morning, your testicles should be fully recharged.

Natural sources of arginine include nuts, gelatin, chocolate, brown rice, oatmeal, raisins, sunflower/sesame seeds, wholewheat bread, and protein supplements.

Arginine or L-arginine should not be given to growing children or people with schizophrenic conditions or those with herpes. Caution: Do not exceed 20-30 grams a day, as it can cause bone and joint deformities.

Women's concerns

- Add more apples, grapes, grapefruit and onions to your diet. They contain bioactive that can minimize bone loss in women after menopause.
- Apples and grapes make for a good

MERCEDES Mr Rueda, Lory Yeh and Cory Yeh

EDU Gimenez, Angelene Cabrera and Leah Payot

Hair-y forecast for 2008

FELY Hojares, Pinang Tiongson, Nenena Blardony (standing) Ric Tiongson and Mae Tuason

JULITA Villareal, Brenda Reyes (standing) Jean Bernardo, Chit Sabel, Rose Libongco and Dan Dee

MARGARET Hook, Nenena Liboro, Carlo Bautista and Celso Bautista

JUSTICE Jun Sunada, Leon Alonza, Mai Leyog and Tim de Guzman

THE HAPPY Leonor Jun Bo Jun and Nene Santos L., with their children and their families Leland E. Cobaco, Dino and Rose Wilson, Dixie Lord B. Leonor and Dennis and Mia Leonor

JUSTA Santos, Brenda Reyes, Baby Magsaysay, Fe Rodrigues, Dr. Lot Quirino, Emily Lopez and Daisy Payoso

JOSEPH Estrada, Jun Leonor, Ben Tiongson and Ruben Torres

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen
using Rodish EasyVision
lens

CARLO Velasco, Jason Zubiaga and Monica Benavaja

ALBERT Tagao and Arlene de Castro

STONES Specialties Inc. member Mody Tantoco and DJ Lopez

TALENTED, popular Ryan Agoncillo, L'Oreal Philippines general manager Brian Tavarez and women of style, Pinoy's president Linda Francisco and creative director Andrea Zubiaga

FAB ENTHUSIASTS, brilliant Judah Chavez

ABS Philam Inc. (for) president, talk, darling Jervis Reyes, with Ramon's regals, Nico Tantoco and his wife, adorable confirmee Sally Hesse Kargar

THE LUCKY Manuel Isaac, of Manuel Isaac, Real and Mrs. Noel Mejia

Thirty fabulous years of success for the popular Paredes, pa-cygnet, set to wow us wonder that the occasion was celebrated with the famous 2008 Hair Collection in Glyceapen.

The show featured new hair trends inspired by Wild Seasons, definitely one of the most prestigious fashion-forming schools in the world.

The Avant Museum was packed villiers to elbow by the time our bonded in. I was just in time to hear Paredes's presidential founder, mega-achiever Linda Francisco, welcome everyone and introduce Glyceapen with a short monologue/speech.

Talented creative director Andrea Zubiaga and 11 senior stylists of Paredes, naval, presented their awesome creations, pulsegyps. Loud applause erupted when Paredes senior stylists coverslayed their creations in 30 seconds, stopping and tapping their models' hair for an entirely new hairdo-dahlings.

I later found out that Glyceapen used balance and symmetry to create hard, defined lines and shapes.

As we circulated, we were amazed by the boredom around, like Elwod Professional's general manager Brian Thomson, who is totally supportive of Paredes; fashion fab Aaviyn, the vice president's wife, two charmers, Ardmer de Gamez, and affluxed couple Mike Abaring and Kathy Yap.

They were among the lots of people at the museum.

Glyceapen was inside pose, bit by Elwod Professional and A/X, coach, Calvin Klein, Richard Rose, and Tiara of Siren Specialties Inc.

Clerk-con Females, dahlings, in Salcedo Village, Ayala Avenue, Alabang, Greenbelt, Timog and Annapolis Greenhills.

Unforgettable

It was a splendid night, pulsegyps, on the lush, sprawling garden of the Leonors' in the hub of downtown Manila where more than a few stylish parties had been held. Bright fairy lights adorned the 150-year-old trees. The soothing waterfalls made the evening even more perfect.

Binge businessman Jun Leonor celebrated another ro-per year in his home. Welcoming the year of incitrex was lavishly and true at Taylor Bingchen's hacienda with the motif, Snow Summer Leonor, as you, dahlings.

The excellent chance as in most of their affairs, was personally prepared and supervised by Nene, mom, with expensive colors pressing endless fly.

The entertainer's special guest who was in the mood for partying was his long-time pal, former President Joseph Estrada, who came with his adorable wife Loise "Lei" Estrada.

The gang of Jun and President Erap, including the many gals, were all accounted for. It seemed like everyone turned the hands of time back to when Joseph E. was president, dahlings.

Chance of a lifetime

Every now and then we hear of a big company, bank or credit card company rolling off an awesome lottery win, a trip abroad, or an expensive jackpot.

Believe me, dahlings, there is nothing like being rewarded with a credit card preloaded with a cool million bucks to spend at citi-ish Burnham, view-y-ou?

ABS Philam finally confirmed Sheri Yumul could not have asked for a better answer to his prayers, pulsegyps. Red, winner of ABS Philam's "One Million Shopping Spree in Rustan's," received his prize at the exclusive Black PAP Lounge of Rustan's Makati. With ab-G Phil. Ann's hostess Joann Reyes and Rustan's executive assistant Nico Tantoco and his wife Irma Gaga in attendance, it was a totally memorable day for this lucky millionaire.

Brought to a chauffeured Town ABS Insurance in Rustan's Makati, Sheri and his family started their shopping spree with a relaxing makeover at Rustan's Physio Salon by Kerstin at level 5's uber-chic Heaven on the 5th.

And guess Sheri's first purchase with his preloaded ABS Gold MasterCard?—an exquisite Mont Blanc watch. Sheri and wife Elma's next stop was the Silver Vault to buy a fine diamond jewelry set.

Sheri's shopping list also included a watch, accessories, and T-shirts from Lacoste, buying for kids Gabriel and MA, several bottles of perfume, kitchen equipment, glass, plus.

Sheri repeatedly said, "I can simply overwhelmed. This is one moment I will never forget, not in this lifetime. Thank you, ABS Philam. Thank you."

ABS Philam's Joann, fr. said, "We are extremely proud of our strong affinity to and friendship with Rustan's."

A once-in-a-million chance of a lifetime for the lucky, talented Sheri, the Yumuls, pulsegyps.

Health and beauty trivia

From page 61

diet snack. When you are tempted to munch on something sweet, crunch out by these nutritious friendly fruits.

■ While coffee and tea with the girlfriends may be your favorite pastime, take note that black coffee may not be so good for you. Tomiko found on both beverages is a suspected carcinogen. However, the protein in milk prevents that hazard. So take your coffee or tea with milk.

■ A weekly body scrub is what your skin needs for extra lustre. It washes up dull skin. Try Goodness' vitamin C scrub daily for the face.

Body polish

2 tbsp virgin coco oil, olive or apricot oil

2 tbsp brown sugar, sea-coarsest sea salt, fine powdered juice

Mix well.

Scrub your body from the feet up to the neck. Upward strokes stimulate your lymph to flow more briskly enabling to better circulation, which has a detoxifying effect.

Note: Use only sugar scrub on your face, not salt. It is more gentle.

Enhancing life

Cancer is a lifestyle disease. The more that what you do on a daily basis is to reduce contributors to your good or ill health.

■ In a four-year study to be finished in 2008, it was learned that the risk of stomach cancer can be reduced by 50 percent if you eat half an ounce a day. Onions' allyl sulfides can activate enzymes that neutralize cancer-causing substances.

■ Powerful flavonoids in red pepper are considered more than a thousand times powerful than vitamin E in combating bad cholesterol.

Affects today: "I do not age, simply upgrade with time."

Love and light!

Reference: "Ultimate Bible for the 21st Century," by Earl Mindell

Streaming: Wellness Boss—Celebrate Life with Gary Quintos," 10:45 a.m., March 8 at 97.5 WRock

Safe, effective medicines need not be expensive

By Joel V. Nigos

Heavy on the heart and difficult on the pocket, this is what we commonly hear when an illness strikes a loved one. There's another one that goes, "When one gets sick, he gets more sick not because of his illness but when he learns how much he has to shell out for his medicines."

Sometimes we share these stories in jest later realizing that they are realities of life. The high cost of medicines often is the culprit why keeping and immediately recovering from a disease is hard especially for poor people.

The Philippine HealthWatch Initiatives Inc., a non government organization composed of representatives from various stakeholders in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries, wanted to address this problem.

Headed by its president and CEO Roberto M. Pagdanganan, it is established to promote synergy and closer collaboration among partners such as drug manufacturers, distributors, pharmacies, healthcare providers, allied health professionals, civil society organizations, the media and consumers. The organization's ultimate mission is to help make quality healthcare and medicines affordable, available and accessible to the Filipino people, thereby improving their quality of life.

Included in this vision are healthcare advocacy and consumer empowerment, to be an effective catalyst in providing good quality affordable medicines to every Filipino citizen, pursue universal health insurance coverage for all Filipinos by 2010 (Bill 1876), and help create a policy environment that will facilitate the attainment of its vision.

These goals, Pagdanganan notes, when fully achieved would make safe and efficacious medicines accessible to the Filipino people.

Health Watch's principal partner and program co-initiator is the PITC Pharma. PITC is accredited with ISO 9002, was designated as the lead coordinating agency tasked to make quality medicines available, affordable and accessible to the greater masses of people, especially the poor.

3-point strategy

To achieve HealthWatch's "Well-Priced Medicines Program," it came up with three strategies. First is the inclusion of product range which is aimed to provide Filipinos with safe and efficacious low-priced medicines through packed shipoffs of MNC-branded medicines, locally sourced branded generic products, and locally sourced true generic products.

Second is the expansion of distribution network, that is, to establish a nationwide network of privately owned drug stores as well as local government operated retail drug outlets to ensure accessibility and availability of quality low-priced medicines. This includes 2,000 Botika ng Bayan and 12,000 Botika ng Barangay outlets by 2007 and an additional 30,000 special outlets by 2010.

Third is the advocacy and information campaign to educate the general public that safe and efficacious medicines are not necessarily expensive.

Since branded medicines at present account for 96 percent of the total pharmaceutical market and only 4 percent are generics, these three-point strategy would help encourage the public to use generic medicines since they are much lower in cost and would be easily accessible to the public because of the initiatives of Health Watch.

Qualibet president and CEO Pinky Tobiano (left) with drug analyst April de Leon at the Qualibet testing laboratories.

Qualibet

One of the vital partners of the Health Watch initiatives is Qualibet Testing Services Inc.

"There's a misconception that low-cost drugs are not as effective as the expensive ones and are also not as safe. We wanted to correct that impression," shares Pagdanganan.

He adds that this is the reason why they tapped the services of Qualibet. The testing firm would be primarily involved in monitoring the quality and safety of medicines Health Watch would help distribute.

"It is important to check and monitor regularly the quality of these drugs so you will know if they potency is true based on its claim," notes Pinky Tobiano, Qualibet president and CEO.

She cites as an example a person suffering from tuberculosis. If the medication prescribed is underdose because of a fake claim by the drug manufacturer, the possibility that the T.B. patient would not be cured is high and would even complicate his medical situation. Worse, it may even cause death, Tobiano stresses.

She defines unsafe medicines as not safe for consumption or of substandard quality. It may also be adulterated or it did not comply with the required formulation.

With Qualibet, notes Tobiano, the goal of HealthWatch as far as making affordable and safe medicines a concerned would be easily achieved.

Qualibet is a food, water, pharmaceutical and veterinary testing firm managed by US-trained chemists, pharmacists and microbiologists. The company which boasts of the most modern testing facilities in the country is affiliated with the American Chemical Society and is also ISO 9000 certified. Qualibet tests pharmaceutical products for safety.

Cited by Harvard Business School as an outstanding alumna for her efforts in creating awareness for consumer rights in the Philippines, Tobiano is a cancer survivor who has made consumer empowerment as her advocacy. She took the "Owners President Management Course" at Harvard from 2000-2005. She's the first Asian alumni to have been given that recognition.

With Qualibet's role in HealthWatch, Tobiano believes that the consumers are now empowered. They now have access to affordable medicines without worrying about its safety and efficacy.

Always Look For The Seal Of Excellence, The Seal Of Qualibet!

Responsible manufacturers and distributors should have their medicines checked by a third party laboratory to assure the consumers of their potency and claim. Always look for the seal of Qualibet, the seal of safety and assurance. Call Gigi or Hope at 0917-8660711 or 0922-8174470. Learn more about how products are analyzed using our stringent laboratory tests.

QUALIBET SEAL OF EXCELLENCE

A Message Of Concern From

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For A Safer and Better Life

121 Delgado St. Project 1, Quezon City, Philippines

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HealthWatch

Philippine HealthWatch Initiatives, Inc.

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Take Charge Doc!

What is Leprosy?

Leprosy or Hansen's disease is an infectious disease... [illegible]

INNER AWARENESS
Jayme Jacinto

Inner dance explained

Part V

FUVELARAZA TOLD ME I COULD find some explanation of what the inner dance was all about and what happened during the dance in the book of Carlos Castaneda, "Magical Passes."

I am familiar with that book. I told Fe I thought that book in 1969 but never read it. It said, "Read it."

And when I did, I was really amazed at what Castaneda had to say about "Magical Passes" that Don Juan taught him but never seem anywhere in his previous books, most of which I had read, beginning with "The Teaching of Don Juan" that became an instant bestseller in the '60s.

That a person stores within himself/herself sensations, power and energy like been known since ancient times. How to release and connect that stored energy has preoccupied mystics, gurus and seers all over the world.

Different names

What caused some confusion to the first time readers was its called by various names. In ancient China it was called chi, in Japanese, in India prana.

Western researchers like Reichenbeck called it "odic force" and Wilhelm Reich, "orgone energy".

Indian yoga philosophy teaches us that at the base of our spine lies a potential force or energy called kundalini which, if opened prematurely, can be dangerous.

The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus stated, "Everything is in a state of flux." Nothing in the universe remains static or stationary.

Modern quantum physicists could not agree with him more because they have discovered that the fundamental stuff of the universe is energy, which is constantly in motion. Movement is the law governing the smallest particles of matter.

And the release or activation of that energy within us is the primary goal of the Subanen Inner Dance. But what is activated is a feminine energy so it is gentle and soft.

Fe explained it this way:

"The word 'dance' may confuse people into thinking that the Inner Dance is a discipline. It is not. A discipline is something that can be studied and practiced regularly by a disciplined person. A discipline is an active cause that leads to a desired effect.

A mirror

"The Inner Dance is not a cause. It is an effect. Think of a counterpart that reflects whatever kind of energy is within you. The attention of the Inner Dance is El, for identification. The Inner Dance mirrors who you really are—outside of your masks and illusions."

According to Fe, "People, for a long time, have been looking for an inner work that works, a way of connecting with our Creator so citing in meditation and memorizing prayers do not seem to do the job quite well.

He said the Inner Dance worked in several dimensions.

"First, it is a way of quieting the hyper-mental space of even the busiest workaholic." Members of our spiritual alternative group, for example, use stimulative busy businessmen and women.

"Second, it has miraculously healed some difficult illnesses." He cited two examples a leprosy popped out of the veins of a participant. After he did the dance once more healed.

In our own group, several reported the complete disappearance of serious back pains, stiff neck and headaches.

"The third dimension," according to Fe, "is the most important. The Inner Dance eyes about a pathway to a higher state of energy consciousness not in a cosmological way, but through a very real and often transformative experience in mind and body in a way that is different in degree, especially since you endow your appendages moving without you exercising volition."

Stars of the pool

SPEEDO'S SPRING/SUMMER 2008 fabrics inspiration from stars and other heavenly bodies.

Already at the cutting edge of swimwear, Speedo has incorporated innovative design elements in the latest collection, including reverse printing on T-shirts and layers of transparent rip-stop nylon over bright prints in both male and female trunk tops.

The layered approach is a literal interpretation of the collection's inspiration taking sunlight as a metaphor for swimmers' personalities and letting this light shine out. The result is an athletic and form-inspired range of swimwear and apparel reflecting the energy, personality, exhilaration and speed[illegible] of these potential stars of the future through bright colors and energetic prints.

Key styles within the apparel range include the Supernova and Magnetic jackets featuring the rip-stop layering-over panels and the Double Short Sleeve T-shirt with its mesh printed on the inside of the garment—letting the design shine through.

Key athletic swimwear pieces for men, women, boys and girls feature On Starlight Placement print and the Explode print overs with its inspiration taken from stellar and cosmic explosions.

Designed for swimmers who spend a lot of time in the pool, Speedo's unique Endurance+ fabric features heavily in the swimwear line. With complete resistance to the effects of chlorine, this specialist fabric also offers improved snagging resistance and a lower level of moisture absorption, while being fast and softer to the touch.

Swimmers need to bring out in the pool on race days and would-be stars out of the pool with carpet of the apparel featuring Technical Cotton, another high prints, unisex fabric that offers a number of benefits including excellent moisture management properties.

The unique sports-inspired collection, expertly combines practical, multi-functional swimwear and apparel with comfortable fabrics and fashion details. The cool, striking styles will appeal to swimmers who want to stand out from the crowd, whether in or out of the pool.

This February Speedo will launch its Spring/Summer 2008 Collection in a fashion show at Bonifacio High Street, Taguig City.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ernesto G. Pefianco

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Inquirer.net Entertainment: http://entertainment.inquirer.net E-mail us at entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Daphne quits 'Proudly'

DID YOU KNOW...

DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ HAS RESIGNED FROM the QTV 11 show "Proudly Filipina" which was launched only last year.

In an e-mailed statement and phone interview, Daphne told Inquirer Entertainment that she was leaving the show with a heavy heart. "It's such a wonderful...intelligent... show," she said.

Shakey's
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French gov't funds Vi's first indie starrer

VILMA Santos

By Rhodnil R. Cruz

INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER Joya Martin has made history as the first Filipino to receive a 1,200,000-euro (P77-million) grant from the French government for his upcoming film "Independencia," about a mother and son who run off to the mountains during the American occupation.

"Independencia" is the first indie film of award-winning actress and Batangas governor Vilma Santos, her producer Irene Cuenco told Inquirer Entertainment.

"French Red Cinema" is a financial aid awarded by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to film productions in developing countries. Since 2004, the grant has funded over 400 documentaries, animations and feature films.

Martin also won a Prime Class Point Center of 15,000 euros ($900,000) in last year's CineMart Awards in Rotterdam. The film was named Best Cinéfilart Project of 2007 ,the Toronto-based Cinéfilart International Film Festival.

Looking for local partner

"We are looking for a local partner (for 'Independencia')," said Cuenco. "Filming is tentatively set in September."

Written by Martin and Ramon Sarmiento, "Independencia" is a family drama set in the early 1900s.

"We had a meeting with Vilma (yesterday)," said Cuenco in a phone interview on Friday. "She liked the script and promised to fit her schedule."

Martin was the first Filipino to be granted a six-month filmmaking residency at the Festival du Cannes' CineFondation in France. "Independencia" is the product of that grant. It also is his follow-up to the critically acclaimed full-length "Short Film About Indio Nacional," screened last year at the Rotterdam IFF.

Martin was last year's Cinemanila IFF Best Director awardee for "Autobiography," a quasi-autobiographical account of

FRENCH Ambassador to the Philippines H.E. Gerard Chesnel, right, congratulates Joya Martin, director of "Independencia"

his boyhood in Cannes' Cinefondation in 1997. The short film, "The Hat," won the Silkroad Detroit Award for Young Cinema at the 2004 Cinemanila fest. His short, "The Island at the End of the World," won Best Documentary at the 2005 Amsterdam Uitzicht Film Festival.

Fil-Ams on AI

By Rayzel Sol Diego Jr.

DAVID Archuleta

REGULAR VIEWERS OF "American Idol" on Star World and QTV may have noticed that several Filipino-looking contestants have made it to the world-famous reality contest's Hollywood round.

One confirmed Pi-Am, according to QTV's research department, is 17-year-old David Archuleta, who wowed judges Randy Jackson, Paula Abdul and Simon Cowell in the San Diego auditions.

First thought he said he was earlier affiliated with "vocal chord paralysis" and forgot some lines of John Mayer's "Waiting on the World to Change," he was a standout—Jackson gamely sang backup to him; Abdul mentioned that she wanted to "squish" him; and Cowell recommended him on his song choice.

According to different bloggers, Archuleta won in the Idolite section of "Star Search" at age 13. That same year he met and sang for AI's Season 1 contestants, including winner

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OPENS IN THEATERS FEBRUARY 13

Brazilian models seen with Sam Milby

"PLEASE LOOK AT this link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Amthw-bmaKo&eurl=.

A choose some Brazilian models topping a conversation with Sam Milby and asking him to come over. The will prove his detractors wrong about claims that he's gay." —Mike Ordoñez (mordonez@yahoo.com)

I texted Sam about this and he replied: "I haven't seen the video but I heard about it. Was just letting the models listen to the song I composed."

In the video, Sam looked like he was having class; Sat while playing his guitar and playing hard to get with the models.

Action-drama series

THE MULTI-AWARDED actress-drama series "Pulso" is finally here (weeknights after "Lobo" on ABS-CBN). Cesar "Buboy" Montano portrays the serial and shy agent who brings justice to the oppressed. Some scenes were shot in Macau.

It's the first team-up of Buboy and wife Sunshine Cruz on TV. Won't their marital squabbles get in the way of their work?

Buboy is still in the process of wooing Alma back. "Mirnan and I keep work and domestic problems separate," re-plans Buboy.

Just as Buboy reveals to his "Pulso" mentor, Sir Ronnie, to back up his promises to Divine with actions.

Exclusive deal

MARK Anthony Fernandez is about to sign an exclusive contract with GMA 7. Shhh is at his peak. He never has been misrepresented just as the former junkie has unveiled his ways.

Did his dad's (Rudy Fernandez) boss with the Big C move at 4 weeks up cash? "Wasn't before my dad got sick. I was already serious about getting my act together. But now I'm more focused," he says.

Was his rehab days toughest than dealing with his dad's ailments now? "It's harder to accept what happened to my dad. Nakakaiyak ako minsan. I felt sinisisi ang sarili ko sa pagkakasakit niya. Sabi ko, 'Dad, sana ako na lang.' Ayaw ko kasi siyang nakikitang nahihirapan. Ang hirap kasi, hindi ko alam kung ano ang gagawin ko

At the Cinemas

Eliburetta 1	1 American Gangster	2 Good Luck Chuck	3 Alien vs. Predator 2	4 National Treasure: Book of Secrets			
Eliburetta 4	1 Good Luck Chuck	2 National Treasure: Book of Secrets	3 Alien vs. Predator 2				
Greenbelt 1	4 American Gangster	5 Sweeney Todd	6 Alien & the Cryptkeeper	7 P.S. I Love You			
Greenbelt 2	1 American Gangster	2 Alien vs. Predator 2					
	1 Alien vs. Predator 2	2 Alien & the Cryptkeeper					
	3 American Gangster	4 P.S. I Love You	5 John Rambo 4				
Alabang Town Center	1 Alien vs. Predator 2	2 Good Luck Chuck					
	3 P.S. I Love You	4 American Gangster	5 Alvin & the Chipmunks				
Ayala Center Cebu	1 Alien vs. Predator 2	2 American Gangster	3 I Could Never Be Your Woman	4 John Rambo 4			
Market! Market!	1 Alien vs. Predator 2	2 American Gangster					
	3 P.S. I Love You	4 Good Luck Chuck	5 Alvin & the Chipmunks				
Trinoma	1 Sweeney Todd	2 National Treasure: Book of Secrets	3 American Gangster	4 P.S. I Love You			
	5 Good Luck Chuck	6 John Rambo 4	7 Alien vs. Predator 2				

At the Malls

Ayala Malls

- Glorietta — Photocontest Movies, January 18 to February 4
- Greenbelt — Welcome 2008 Sale, January 11 to February 3
- Alabang Town Center — Alvin & The Chipmunks Live at Alabang Town Center, January 26 & 27, 11am, 2pm & 4pm, Activity Center
- Ayala Center Cebu — Welcome 2008 Sale, January 11 to February 3
- Market! Market! — Welcome 2008 Sale, January 11 to February 3
- Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE, January 11 to 27, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 887-3110 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
- Ayala Museum — Paintings by Juan Luna, Fernando Amorsolo, and Vicente Rivera. For more info, pls. call 757-1117 loc 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
- Tri Noma — Welcome 2008 Sale, January 11 to February 3

SM CINEMA

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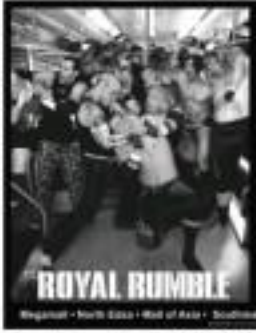
Your life as a movie

SPORTSTIME



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GALLERIA

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2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	7 I AM LEGEND
3 P.S. I LOVE YOU	8 Indistinct: CONDO
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5 JOHN RAMBO	10 SWEENEY TODD

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ERMITA

1 P.S. I LOVE YOU	6 NATIONAL TREASURE 2
2 Indistinct: SING	7 I AM LEGEND
3 DRAGON WAR	1 AMERICAN GANGSTER
4 THE HEARTBREAK KID SWEENEY TODD 5:20 7:40 10:00	2 JOHN RAMBO
5 GOOD LUCK CHUCK Sneak Preview	2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2

METRO EAST

1 P.S. I LOVE YOU	5 I AM LEGEND
2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	6 SWEENEY TODD ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS
3 JOHN RAMBO	7 NATIONAL TREASURE 2
4 AMERICAN GANGSTER	8 THE HEARTBREAK KID DRAGON WAR

NOVALICHES

1 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	5 I AM LEGEND
2 DRAGON WAR	6 AMERICAN GANGSTER
3 NATIONAL TREASURE 2	7 GOOD LUCK CHUCK Sneak Preview
4 JOHN RAMBO	

PIONEER

1 AMERICAN GANGSTER	5 P.S. I LOVE YOU
2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	4 JOHN RAMBO

STA. ROSA

1 JOHN RAMBO
2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
3 I AM LEGEND
4 GOOD LUCK CHUCK Sneak Preview

LIPA

1 NATIONAL TREASURE 2
2 I AM LEGEND
3 DESPERADAS
4 KATAS ng SAUDI
5 DEATH PROOF

DASMARINAS

1 GOD LUCK CHUCK Sneak Preview
2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
3 JOHN RAMBO
4 SWEENEY TODD

IMUS

1 JOHN RAMBO
2 AMERICAN GANGSTER
3 GOD LUCK CHUCK Sneak Preview
4 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2

ANGELES

1 JOHN RAMBO
2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
3 GOOD LUCK CHUCK Sneak Preview
4 THE HEARTBREAK KID

TARLAC

1 I AM LEGEND
2 NATIONAL TREASURE 2
3 DESPERADAS

STARMILLS

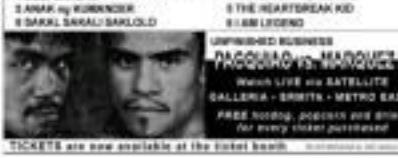
1 I AM LEGEND / SWEENEY TODD	4 THE HEARTBREAK KID
2 DESPERADAS	5 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
3 GOOD LUCK CHUCK Sneak Preview	6 JOHN RAMBO

BACOLOD

1 NATIONAL TREASURE 2
2 I AM LEGEND
3 BEE MOVIE / ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
4 DESPERADAS
5 ANAK ng KORINGKING
6 SAKAL, SAKAL, SAKLOLO

ILOILO

1 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
2 HOOD of HORROR
3 JOHN RAMBO
4 NATIONAL TREASURE 2
5 THE HEARTBREAK KID
6 I AM LEGEND



TICKETS are now available at the ticket booth

Ma'Nr. Anthony Fernandez

Brazilian models seen with Sam Milby

From page B-1

'Endo,' rated 'R'

ITHOROUGHLY enjoyed the indie film "Endo." I read my colleagues at the Cinema Evaluation Board gave it an "R" rating. It's about commercial workers jumping from one job to another, without security of tenure.

After watching the movie, you would be kinder to subcontractors and show them more compassion. I want to (segment) with the acting of Jun Urbina, who took over for the (unseen, legendary performer) Lauro Guillen and Johnny Delgado.

Arnon Abubo was quite a revelation in the film. He and Jun, who are a welcome respite from sunny lipped-up love teams, ought to make more movies together.

More "Endo" for the most of more engaging indie films to hit and hurt the silver screen.

Ratings game

HERE'S an update on the raging controversy between the two giant TV stations. Reportedly, the Kapuso Network's war with movie hero is "Katapusan." Who don't the two channels just dismiss their angst to cooking up shows with (expert)?

ABS-CBN's statement: "The disparity between cable and non-cable TV ratings is a non-issue, but the assumption of AGB Nielsen Media Research's Pride panel license to the real issue. The disparity is due to reception problems and ABS-CBN continues to lead in the nationwide TV ratings except in Mega Manila where it suffers blurry reception in some areas. GMA's complaints of interference in cable TV ratings have never prospered because there are "misplaced," unlike ABS-CBN's complaint about the assumption of AGB Nielsen's sound bonnet that is supported by owner assessment of urbanization and priced home members.

GMA-7's statement: "Contrary to what ABS-CBN said, the disparity between cable and non-cable ratings in GMA's programs is a legitimate issue as the move to clean up the ratings and shore Chabon being traveled upon by the hefty rendition of 'Sad 7 Sec Telling You Each Going.'"

Hmm seems, however, that the real issue is not the ratings but the quality of programming. Both networks have been criticized for their lack of creativity and originality. Maybe it's time for them to stop fighting over numbers and start fighting over ideas.

Fil-Ams on AI

From page D-1

Kelly Chokwee

The video of Ambalero's dog encounter with the bear is posted on YouTube and shows Chokwee being surrounds di Season 7, which begins the audition process last year Still, Idol fans have branded the Net with their fondest memories.

At least three Filipino-American fans figured in the online celebration spree.

Apart from Ambalero, blogger hosted that NCAA girls Pamela Maldoni and Haydee Go have also made it to the Top 50.

The Net reports some maids by blogger who rounded (unless some more—including those eliminated from the competition.

A news report posted claimed that Ambalero and Maldoni have made it to the Top 24. At press time, Go's fan site still movements, but a "purported" complete list posted to a website didn't include her name among the Top 12 Gals.

Has been?

The online site, celebritynet.com, complained that a member of the remnant of Dominican couldn't be considered "undiscovered" talent"—like Ambalero who had topped "Star Search," and Idolchon, Carly Smithson who had been in early favorites in Season 5 but was disqualified due to visa problems.

According to the site, Smithson had already released a poorly received CD.

The site scoffed: "There are many contestants who are in the Top 50 who have failed career ... has beens who have failed at becoming famous yet crash their way onto the show."

Daphne..

From page D-1

adding that she received "so much support ... from the staff and management of QTV" for five seasons.

She had (gal) to focus on her role as mom to five-year-old Sophia and one-year-old Lily, she said.

Insiders said the show would be re-launched this week, which is (up) for air by Sept. Report: Ilan Diego Jr.

A daily serial by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNIEL A. AVETRIA

A. LIPIN — BY JOEL ABRERA

FUSAO DAIKOT — BY FPJ JUAREZ

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMIC AND WEBBY — BY LEN QUECILLANO

LOVEMINUTE — BY ELIZABETH CHONGUO

KIKO PAKORNE — BY FRANCIS ABRERA

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DIAKT

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Concepts Sudoku — By Dave Tarrow

	2							
		1			2			8
		4	6	8		5	2	
	1		5		6	9		
		5		2		4		
		9	4		3		7	
	5	8		3	9	1		
7			8			3		
							9	

Difficulty Level ★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	5	4	3	8	6	7	1	9
7	9	6	4	1	2	8	5	3
3	8	1	5	7	9	4	6	2
4	1	5	6	2	3	9	8	7
9	3	8	7	4	1	2	6	5
6	2	7	9	5	8	1	3	4
1	4	9	2	6	5	3	7	8
5	7	3	8	9	4	6	2	1
8	6	2	1	3	7	5	4	9

ANICA Mercoso

GIB Gibala

KAT Alano

3 new VJs face one challenging year

TAKE FIVE

By Melmelfi Cruz

MTV PHILIPPINES' NEW VJs have big shoes to fill.

Kat Alano, Anil Manzano and Gib Gibala are taking over the duo left by Dennis Rose (Candy Hearts and DC Comicspiracy).

"They were really good," Anil said when the current VJs sat down with Inquirer Entertainment recently.

"It's an honor to be in this group," added Kat, a former "Showcaster" on Studio 23.

Kat, Anil and Gib were picked from over a hundred finalists in the MTV VJ Hunt 2007 held at the Ali Mall of Asia. Posters numbered on the side list six: Francis Magalona, Mare Abaya, Belinda Beatriz, KC Montero, Sarah Meier, Raniston Tones, Pony Lazard and Marcel Ba... (illegible). The search has been held every two years since 2005.

How was the VJ Hunt experience?

KC: Only 12 of us competed in the finals, six boys and six girls. We were given some weird tasks. We were camping...camp wears even.

Kat: My team lost so we had to pitch the tents, build a bonfire and cook food for rats. We also did something a la "Project Runway," redesigning our outfits. For the character challenge, we picked one character and acted it out. I was Dexter. Anil was Shaun of "Scooby Doo."

Anil: Gib had a Battalion Question round with Bb. Paulsen.

Kat: For the interview challenge, we talked to someone we usually don't know and had 10 minutes to prepare. I interviewed Anil of "Nasi sad Mawsak." It was crazy. He was trying to dance me off the whole time. I thought I did badly, but I was then trained.

KC: I interviewed Mark Summers. I didn't do that very well because he used to interviewing weirdos in general.

Anil: I interviewed Norma Bautista, a teacher. She's very intelligent. Dreamed a kitchen here.

Ah, how did your Jack TV experience help?

Anil: Yes it was in Jack TV I honed my hosting skills. Once they suspect you're overprepared they bring in front of the camera.

Do you have specific duties assigned to you now?

Kat: Gib have yet to get our own shows. But today "Rate One," which we do in rotation. We also do "Gimme Tre" and "Campus Crushers." We cover events, host gigs. I went to Palawan, and Hong Kong to cover the Shopping Festival. Anil visited Cagayan Valley.

Anil: They don't send me anywhere—I don't look good naked.

Are we about to see a better MTV Philippines now that it's repackaged and unveil our look like MTV Singapore?

Kat: Studio Shows will be more localized shows.

Anil: We're planning a show similar to "TRL (Total Request Live, broadcast live from MTV's New York studio in Times Square).

The competition between MTV and 30's is intense. How are you approaching this?

KC: There's both music channels but they have different themes and target audiences. 30's is pop music talaga. MTV caters to everybody.

Anil: MTV's about music and youth culture. We'll soon be having live shows, too.

Kat: We have "MTV Jinx," about superstition and human trafficking. We have things that educate the youth because we know that we have a social responsibility.

Do you share your ideas with the production team? How much of your input actually make it to the shows?

Anil: We sit with them with them to discuss what we want, and what we think MTV needs. For example, maybe a game show.

Kat: I like to bring show!

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE